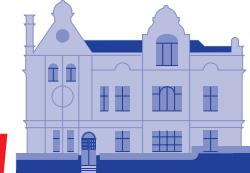


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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2017

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TOP WHERE SOLD

MAYOR'S BABY UNIT CASH PLEA

Report by Sue Austin

HEALTH bosses must press the government for more funding to keep the birthing ward for Oswestry mums open, the town's mayor says.

Mayor Vince Hunt says he fears babies will be born at the side of the A5 in ambulances on the way to Shrewsbury if controversial changes to the county's midwifery set-up are agreed.

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) new model for services would close the in-patient beds at Oswestry's maternity unit and transform it instead into a community hub for antenatal and postnatal care. Births will take place at a midwife-led maternity unit at Shrewsbury, at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford or at home.

The new model was revealed last week and will be presented to health bosses in the coming weeks before going out to consultation. Councillor Hunt said: "It is dreadfully disappointing that this is the model that the CCG wants.

"I completely understand the reasoning behind this but that does not mean that it is right. There have been very few births at the Oswestry maternity unit yet to keep it open I understand there has to be three midwives there. It really does seem to be a case of use it or lose it – although mothers-to-be may quite rightly have been reticent because of the uncertainty about whether it would be open."

"What we need to do is press the government to give more money to the health service so that vital services like rural midwifery can continue.

"When my wife, Jenny, gave birth to our eldest son, Josh, 23, she was only in labour for 40 minutes and the two younger ones, Jack and Amber, were even quicker. If we had been living here she would not have made it to Shrewsbury. If we lose the ability for mothers to give birth at Oswestry we are going to have babies born on the side of the A5 in ambulances."

Oswestry mum of four Liz Grayston organised a protest march in July over worries about the downgrading of the town's maternity unit.

Hundreds of people attended the protest and Mrs Grayston this week vowed to fight the new plans. She said: "They have yet to get it through consultation – in front of the women they have apparently 'listened' to. They have a fight on their hands."

● Stop – See Page 2



The march in July

Festive spirit alive and well at community events



Elle Whyte, Verity Perry and Lisa Richards from Chloe Elizabeth Dance Company took part in Oswestry Christmas Parade on Saturday

THE Christmas season is now in full swing in Oswestry and Welshpool after thousands of people attended festive celebrations in the towns.

The streets were packed as families turned out in huge numbers to enjoy Oswestry Christmas Live on Friday night.

A huge funfair was set up in the town centre and musical performances, charity stalls and street entertainers brought festive magic

to Oswestry. A firework display finished off the event.

And the town's streets were jam-packed again on Saturday morning for the hugely popular Oswestry Christmas Parade.

Around 30 floats wound their way through the streets of the town with the crowds treated to displays ranging from Harry Potter and Star Wars, to winter wonderlands and line dancers

People of all ages lined the town's pavements and scooped up sweets and treats thrown from the floats.

Meanwhile, the Christmas spirit was alive and well in Welshpool.

The town's festive lights display was switched on during a ceremony on Friday outside the Town Hall and on Saturday Welshpool's traditional winter fair was staged.

● Fun – See Page 26



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Births may stop at three maternity units under plans

Report by Lucy Todman

MATERNITY services in Shropshire could be overhauled under proposals put forward by health bosses.

Under the plans women would have the option of giving birth at a midwife-led maternity unit in Shrewsbury, Princess Royal Hospital in Telford or at home.

Births would not take place at rural maternity units, including the unit at Oswestry, although a number of maternity hubs could be created to support women before and after birth.

The system has come under scrutiny in recent months after Shropshire and Telford Hospital's NHS Trust took the decision to temporarily close the Midwife Led Units (MLUs) in Oswestry, Ludlow and Bridgnorth due to staffing issues. Following a comprehensive recruitment drive and the appointment of up to 20 midwives these MLUs will reopen on January 1. Health bosses propose that there be at least one maternity hub in Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Telford and they would offer a broad range of services from antenatal and postnatal care from a midwife, scanning, foetal monitoring as well as support with emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyle services. Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group said: "In the proposed model, women would be able to give birth at the consultant-led unit at the Princess Royal Hospital and at the alongside midwife-led unit, which is also on the hospital site, as well as a freestanding midwife-led unit in Shrewsbury and at home."

The plans have been criticised by campaigners who want to see births continue at the MLUs, including the unit at Oswestry.

Gill George, from Shropshire Defend Our NHS, said: "They're playing games with the lives of women and babies. They have been told by hundreds and hundreds of women in our rural communities to keep births and postnatal care in our local areas, and to keep our midwife-led units open."

The proposal will be presented to Shropshire CCG's governing body this month and to the Telford CCG governing body in January before it goes out to consultation.

Health Hero Stuart 'goes the extra mile'



Dr Stuart Bowdler is presented with the Health Hero Award by Mark Brandreth. They are joined by some of the theatres team.

A DOCTOR who provides "invaluable support" has won November's Health Hero award at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Dr Stuart Bowdler, consultant anaesthetist, won the monthly award after being nominated by his colleagues in theatres.

He received five nominations from charge nurse Ian Nicholas, RNA Jennifer Love and staff nurses Nicola Mazi, Lisa Burgess and Louise Beaumont.

They all described him as someone who is always willing to go above and beyond to

help patients and staff. Citations included Nicola's, which stated: "He consistently goes the extra mile for patients, even those he has not been initially involved with, and always provides invaluable support to staff when assistance is needed."

Lisa added: "He is caring and compassionate. He goes out of his way to help staff and patients alike." And Louise said: "He always goes that extra mile and is so friendly and approachable."

Dr Bowdler said: "I'm honestly in com-

plete shock but I am very grateful. Being named a Health Hero means the world to me."

"I am very fortunate to do the job I do. This award isn't just for me though; it's a reflection on the whole team's efforts and really showcases what a fantastic team I work with."

The award, which was announced at the board of directors' meeting, was presented to Dr Bowdler by chief executive Mark Brandreth.

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Store thief 'deserved a heavier sentence'

THE man who apprehended a thief who stole an OAP's purse believes the sentence handed out was too lenient.

Last week Catalin-mihai Verea admitted the theft and was ordered to pay compensation and carry out 200 hours of unpaid work.

His 87-year-old female victim was unaware her money and cards had been stolen until she got to the till, in Aldi supermarket on Oswald Road, Oswestry, on October 24.

An appeal was made by police following the incident, and weeks later when finishing a shift in Morrisons, near to where the theft took place, store worker Mark Jones spotted Verea, 44.

He called his duty manager, who stopped the man from leaving the store.

Mark said: "I spoke to the duty manager and we rang the police and decided to ask the man back into the store. There were also customers on hand to help out in case the man decided to break away, it was a real community and team effort."

Mr Jones believes the sentence handed out wasn't heavy enough.

He said: "The magistrate described it as a despicable crime, I believe he should have served some time in prison. I think if it was myself it was done to, then the punishment would have been okay, but it was an elderly lady and it should have been heavier."

Safe is stolen in burglary at centre

THIEVES who broke into a home and garden centre on the edge of Welshpool took a safe containing what the company said was a significant amount of cash.

Police have appealed for witnesses to the raid at the Charlies store, Coed-y-Dinas, in the early hours of November 23.

To help call police on 101.

By Deborah Hardiman

A MAN who stole a pensioner's purse in a "despicable crime" while she was shopping in a supermarket has been ordered to carry out 200 hours unpaid work.

The 87-year-old woman was shopping in Aldi in Oswestry's Oswald Road on October 24 when her purse containing £75 was snatched by 44-year-old Catalin-mihai Verea.

The Romanian national pleaded guilty to theft at Telford Magistrates Court on Tuesday last week.

Abigail Hall, prosecuting, said the incident happened shortly after the elderly woman arrived at the premises at 10.15am and was captured on the security cameras.

In her victim impact statement, the woman said: "To be honest I'm as tough as old boots. I have been carrying on a normal. I was not physically hurt and I didn't know anything until I got to the till and I couldn't find my purse. Since this happened I have carried on with my normal routine. It hasn't stopped me. Obviously I lost the cash from my purse. Also it costs me about £48 a week in bus fares because I haven't got my free bus pass."

Lisa Morris-Jones, for Verea, told the court that her client, who has been living in the UK for 12 months, regretted what he had done and was "remorseful".

She said he had caught a lift to Oswestry after being promised cleaning work, but when he arrived no-one turned up to meet him.

The court also heard that the cash was removed from the purse which was thrown in a bin. The magistrates ordered Verea, of Thimblemill Road, in Smeethwick, to pay £192.50 in compensation, £185 cost and victims' surcharge £85.

"We find that this is a despicable crime. The only good thing was that the victim was emotionally strong," the chairman of the bench Margaret Linington-Payne said.

The theft grabbed national attention and prompted a JustGiving page to be set up to raise money for the victim. There was a target of £200 but it eventually raised more than £4,500.

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Man gets court order for 'despicable' purse theft

Group has designs on retail success



Designs in Mind members Ellie Lee, Marion Alcock, Gary Thomas, Helen Whitehead and Alison Scott

A COMMUNITY Interest Company has taken out a permanent lease on a shop to help tackle the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Designs in Mind moved into the former Chrissie's in Cross Street, Oswestry, following a successful trial period there as a pop-up shop earlier this year.

The shop - Jolt - sells homeware and prints for the home in bold colours and patterns. It also provides workshops for the public to

try their hand at screen printing and lino printing. Jo Watkins, from Designs in Mind, said: "We opened Jolt on November 25 following an extremely successful trial period earlier in the year. The shop is next door to our Designs in Mind studio and is in an ideal location.

"There are fewer and fewer retail opportunities in the town these days and Designs in Mind has been there for 10 years so when the opportunity came for us to take on a

trial period at the shop next door we jumped at the chance. We moved out after our trial period but when the call came that the premises were still available we moved back in.

"It is the first time we have had a retail presence and it's a natural expansion.

"Our aim is to sell lots of items now and draw as many people as possible into the shop in our challenge to take the stigma out of mental health."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Residents face water disruption

WELSHPOOL residents could encounter some minor disruptions to their water supply as Severn Trent carries out work to clean water.

Several areas of the town have reported discoloured water which, although safe, is caused by a build-up of sediment on the inside of water pipes.

Contractors PN Daly will be carrying out work until Thursday next week and hopes to contain the loss of supply to certain night times only.

"To further reduce the likelihood of discoloured water we are carrying out a programme of work to clean our water pipes," a Severn Trent spokesman said.

It is eyes down for fundraiser

A CHRISTMAS prize bingo evening will be held in Welshpool next week.

It will be held at the Corn Exchange in the town on Tuesday.

The event will raise money for next year's Welshpool 1940s Weekend.

Mulled wine and mince pies are included in the cost of admission with loads of festive goodies to be won, organisers have said.

Doors open at 6.30pm with eyes down at 7pm.

Performances set to hit right note

THE people of Montgomery and surrounding towns and villages are being invited to an afternoon and evening of carols and Christmas treats with Mid Wales Opera on Sunday.

Singers are invited from 2pm as music director Jonathan Lyness leads a rehearsal of new choral pieces as well as traditional favourites for performance that evening in Montgomery's historic St Nicholas Church at 6pm. Call (01686) 614563 for prices.

Treat for Inner Wheel

MEMBERS of Welshpool Inner Wheel will have their Christmas lunch next week.

It will take place at The Station Grill on Tuesday.

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Effie Cadwallader and Ian Slipper with the machines

Training starts on use of defibrillators

TRAINING courses are being run to help people in Oswestry use defibrillators, the life-saving heart-start machines that are being put up on more and more public buildings.

Oswestry Cambrian Rotary Club is working with the British Heart

Foundation "Heart Start" course and community first responders to deliver training courses in the area and have purchased three special training machines.

Spokesman Mike Lade said: "We offer courses in basic life saving skills and the latest feed-back was

that it would be very useful to actually get hands-on practice in applying the defibrillator pads and hear the commands given by the machine.

"These generic trainers are fairly new to the market but will add that new and vital dimension to the

delivery of the two-hour course." Community first responder Effie Cadwallader and rotary club president Ian Slipper recently met to discuss the training programme.

For more information about the programme people can call (01691) 650854.

'Bay watch' scheme helps reduce hospital fall levels

Report by Sue Austin

STAFF at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital have put in place a special package to help prevent falls among particularly the older patients, bosses have been told.

A pilot scheme has seen the number of falls drop by 50 per cent over the past year.

There was a further reduction in the number of inpatient falls at the hospital during October with just 11, all but one inpatients. The hospital's NHS trust board was told on

Theatre work in the spotlight

OPERATING sessions at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital have come under the microscope to ensure the theatres are running at full capacity.

The hospital now updates its fortnightly theatre use each day and has seen an increase in both activity and in income.

However the changes to keep the operating theatres fully booked does mean that there are more on-day cancellations, the NHS hospital trust board heard.

At a meeting of the trust, medical director Steve White told of the planning that makes sure operating sessions were being best used.

"We have looked at the number of cases on the list and seen increases in both activity and income," he said.

"There had been a slippage so we took action," he said.

Thursday last week that the decrease was due to the roll-out in surgery of the falls package and the implementation of a special "bay watch" system on the surgical wards.

A successful pilot scheme has been ongoing on the Sheldon Ward with ward manager Lorna Edwards explaining to the meeting that a number of changes have been introduced in the past year.

These have included looking at ward layout, slipper socks for patients, a falls sensor installed and a special "bay watch" scheme. This sees the most prone to falls patients moved into a bay in best view of nursing staff.

The trust board was told that as it stands the ward is currently 43 days without a fall. Since the introduction of the new measures, the longest the ward has gone between falls is 96 days.

Director of nursing Bev Tabernacle said the work on Sheldon formed part of the falls collaborative work, and was now being rolled out in the hospital's medical and surgical divisions.

"It has been a good piece of work," she said.

Chart hopefuls stay on song



The Hope House Choir entertained shoppers at Stans Superstore in St Martins A CHOIR that has found itself in the midst of a Christmas number one race was taking it in its stride last week, singing carols.

The Hope House choir was at Stans Superstore in St Martins near Oswestry singing for shoppers while raising money for Hope House Children's Hospice.

Store bosses sold a hot drink and mince pies for just £1 with all the funds going to the hospice.

The choir has joined forces with other charity choirs under the name, Choirs with a Purpose and Pop Idol winner Michelle

McManus to release Paul McCartney's We all Stand Together.

Already the song has reached number eight in the Amazon chart with the official charts even shortlisting the song as one of the contenders for the top spot alongside Wham's Last Christmas and Michael Ball and Alfie Boe's Bring me Sunshine.

Money from the sale of the single will be split equally between the participating choirs in aid of their charity work. Those taking part include the Britain's Got Talent Missing People's Choir.

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Over-development 'has led to destruction of village'

Report by Jonny Drury

THE village of Morda has been "destroyed" by over-development, a parish councillor has said.

Councillor Robert Milton was speaking as Shropshire Council bosses continue to seek views on controversial plans to build an extra 10,000 homes across the county. Although almost 19,000 homes are already set to be built in the county, the plans say a further 10,000 will be needed by 2036.

New inquest decision is welcomed

THE family of a soldier from the Shropshire border who died at the Deepcut Army barracks has welcomed a fresh inquest into the death of another young soldier.

But the parents of Cheryl James said there has still been no meaningful inquiry into why four soldiers died at the Surrey training camp. Des and Doreen James from Llanymynech say they are pleased that the High Court has ruled that a new inquest will be held into the death of Private Geoff Gray, 17, found with two gunshot wounds to his head in 2001.

His death came seven years after Cheryl James was found dead with a bullet wound to the head. Last year a new inquest ruled that she inflicted the wound herself.

Mr James said: "We now have three out of the four deaths at Deepcut having an inquest overturned. Every day it becomes clearer that everything the families have said this past 16 years has been correct yet mystery still shrouds everything the MOD have told us. T

"There has still been no meaningful inquiry and the MOD remain the arbiter of any decision regarding this. As such they are allowed by the state to hide from us whatever they wish. This has to be challenged."

Public consultation on the housing plans will close on December 22. The Campaign to Protect Rural England has already raised fears about the target, set out by Shropshire Council as part of its Local Plan Review. The campaign group says it was not opposed to more housing but it needed to be the right types of homes in the right areas to support the genuine needs of the county's diverse population.

However, Councillor Milton said he feared it was already too late to save traditional village life in Morda. He said: "There has been so much development, Morda is over-developed now. What we want is homes for first time buyers, affordable homes but that hasn't been the case. These estates are three or four bedroom homes. Morda has been destroyed, it has lost its character and village status, it is now just a suburb of Oswestry."

A development is currently ongoing on Weston Road, and it is on top of another Weston Road development in the last 15 years, two Treffonen Road housing estates, and two along Morda Road. There is also planning consent to build flats on the car park of the Miners Arms public house.

The car park of the Miners Arms public house.

Councillor Milton, a member of Oswestry Rural Parish Council, says traffic dangers are a major problem. He said: "It is a well known fact that Morda Road is a major road now, it can be a death trap at times. More traffic will cause more problems, more risks, that goes without saying. We don't have the road systems for these amount of houses. You could argue that Morda needs a chained small supermarket store, that could add much need infrastructure to accommodate the extra people."

Old school becomes a nursery



Louise Batham-Willmore at the soon-to-open nursery at Maesbury near Oswestry
A FORMER primary school is being transformed into a nursery for more than 100 youngsters.

Unicorn Day Nursery will create up to 30 jobs when it opens at the old Maesbury Primary School near Oswestry.

The building is currently undergoing a £100,000 refurbishment and an opening date has been earmarked for January or February.

The move follows a chance visit to the area by Unicorn Day Nursery owner Louise Batham-Willmore when she came across the empty school and thought it would be an ideal location for a nursery.

"I was told there was a lot of upset when

the school closed and we want this building to be the focus of the community, not just for the nursery but for other events. We would like the local people to enjoy the facilities," she said.

"I came across the place by accident really. I was driving through Maesbury, wasn't actively looking for another nursery but when I saw it I couldn't believe my luck. It was ideal. I thought it would make a fantastic nursery and only about 10 minutes away from Oswestry."

Halls Commercial handled the sale with the offer was accepted within about 10 days.

Louise already runs two other nurseries in the West Midlands.

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Features & Comment

BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

Should county councillors resign from a senior position if serious allegations are made against them? That's the question being thrown around the corridors of power at Powys County Council this week.

The whispering comes after resignation calls by both Conservative and Plaid Cymru leaders in the authority following the announcement that the independent planning committee chairman is under police investigation for allegedly tapping a neighbour's water pipe to supply a holiday home he owns.

Councillor David Price has vehemently denied any wrongdoing and says he's staying put until there's an outcome to the investigation. Claiming the situation is the result of a mistake by his builder the councillor has announced he is sitting tight and on balance he is probably right at the moment.

Politicians and celebrities have become fair game for all kinds of accusations lately.

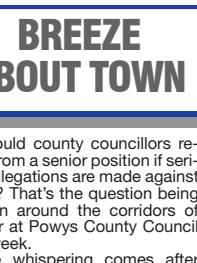
Councillor Price is using the "innocent until proven guilty" defence to remain as head of the planning authority and until he is either investigated by the Local Authority Ombudsman or charged by the police I think he has the right to stay in office. But should the Ombudsman say there is a case or any charges be made by Dyfed Powys Police he should immediately face suspension.

... Anyone who has experienced rail travel to either Manchester or Birmingham Airports from the Oswestry or Welshpool areas will welcome ambitious proposals by North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson.

Mr Paterson wants to see 30-minute services stopping at Gobowen and Shrewsbury with direct connections to both airports and it's beginning to look like he may be getting support from those in high office. Both Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport and Ken Skates, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport are backing his proposals.

It would be welcome news for the thousands of commuters from the Mid Wales & Border areas who are currently faced with a series of badly timed station changes on route to the country's main airports.

Having experienced the situation myself on several occasions I know just how frustrating it can be, particularly if you have lots of luggage to move. Such a development would be a huge bonus for travellers.



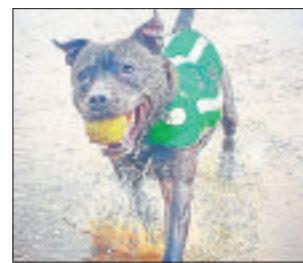
1. Samson the springer spaniel looks very thoughtful



2. Ruby Sherbet looks very happy in this sweet photo



3. Roxy the staffy proves she is picture perfect



4. Charlie plays on the beach and has fun with a ball



5. Pippa enjoys getting her feet up and watching a bit of telly with a pal



6. Charlie jumps for joy as he is taken on a day out to the beach



7. Carla the long haired German shepherd takes it easy for a moment



8. This playful bunch of beagles puppies eagerly await their dinner



9. Toffee the cat seems to think this is all a bit of a yawn



10. Maude and Mack cosy up together for this lovely photo

IT'S YOUR TIME TO VOTE

THIS week we are giving our readers their last opportunity to have a say on who should be crowned the winner of our Animal Crackers competition.

For weeks we have been bombarded by lovely pictures of your treasured pets in our highly popular competition.

We thank everyone for taking the time to send in all the wonderful entries – and sorry once again if your favourite photo didn't make it to print.

Tough

Our judges had the tough task of looking through all the entries and choosing the final 10 which make up the shortlist.

We ran the top 10 in last week's paper and this week we are giving you one final chance to have your say on the best photo.

Making your choice could not be easier.

Simply take a look at all our shortlisted animals and select your favourite.

All of the animals are clearly numbered, making your choice easy to make.



To vote for your favourite photograph either email the picture number to Iain.St.John@shropshirestar.co.uk or tick one box on this form and send it to Iain St John, Weekly Series, Shropshire Star, 14 Salop Road, Oswestry, SY11 1NU.

PICTURE 1

PICTURE 6

PICTURE 2

PICTURE 7

PICTURE 3

PICTURE 8

PICTURE 4

PICTURE 9

PICTURE 5

PICTURE 10

On the page is the voting form with all the details our readers need to let us know which is their favourite.

The competition has been hugely popular – not least because the eventual winner will receive a £100 cash

prize. We will announce the winner in a forthcoming edition. So look closely at the 10 shortlisted pictures and choose the one you think deserves the prize.

Entries must be in by Friday, December 15. This is your chance to have your say!

Advertisement

MY AGGRESSIVE HUSBAND SAYS HE WILL OPPOSE DIVORCE APPLICATION. WHAT CAN I DO?

Q: My husband and I have separated owing to his unpleasant, aggressive behaviour towards me. We constantly row and now I have finally told him I want to bring the marriage to an end on the basis of his unreasonable behaviour. He is really angry and says this is not what he wants. He is threatening that if I try to divorce him he will defend any proceedings and make sure the whole process is as expensive and unpleasant for me as he can. I just don't know what to do. Can you advise me?

A: Sadly, an amicable approach to divorce and separation is not always possible. Clearly you feel your marriage has irretrievably broken down, and what you describe definitely sounds like adequate grounds for divorce on the basis of unreasonable behaviour. Great care will however need to be taken when drafting the instances of your husband's behaviour.

Once you have applied for the divorce your husband may if he wishes to, defend the divorce if he does not accept the marriage has irretrievably broken down or does not accept the grounds relied on for the divorce. Defended divorces are however uncommon. Your husband would need to prepare an answer to the divorce application and then plead his case in court. There would be costs implications for him and possible cost penalties if he is unsuccessful in defending the divorce. The court could also order him to pay some or all of your costs in obtaining the divorce, should he fail in his defence.

Further information relating to this question is available from Linda Hill, a Senior Solicitor with GHP Legal. For an appointment visit www.ghplegal.com or contact one of our offices: Oswestry 01691 659194, Chirk 01691 777949, Wrexham 01978 291456, Llangollen 01978 860313. We offer free legal diagnostic clinics (no appointment necessary). In Oswestry, Wednesdays 12noon-3pm for Personal Injury, Employment & Family matters. In Wrexham, Mondays 9.30am-12noon for Employment matters, 12noon-3pm for Personal Injury & Family matters. GHP Legal is authorised and regulated by the SRA 51566, and Lexcel Accredited.

WORKING FOR YOU



UK politics continues to be dominated by Brexit. While the British people may be thoroughly bored with this situation, I'm afraid it's going to carry on for several years yet. Certainly, there will be no escape for those of us involved in politics. This week, my writing reflects on last week's immigration figures.

During the lead-up to the EU Referendum in June 2016, one of the biggest issues of debate was migration into the UK. I have always thought it likely (though unprovable) that this was a major influence on how the UK voted in the referendum. At the time, net immigration was about 336,000 per annum. I was often asked about this. My response was that while over the short term, this would not be disadvantageous to the UK, it was not sustainable over the long term.

This remains my view. I also thought that a vote to Leave would not have much impact on net immigration figures. I was wrong, though not for the reasons I thought. Net annual immigration into the UK began rapid growth in 1993, and reached its peak of 336,000 in 2015. The first full year figures since the EU referendum shows net immigration falling by 32 per cent to 230,000, the sharpest decrease on record. Less than a half is from the EU. Well over half of it is non EU. At the same time there has been a significant net outward migration of UK citizens.

Of course we don't know why net immigration has fallen so significantly. In part, it may be because the economies of the countries from which has been the source of immigration has created and is providing more jobs at home. Undoubtedly, the fall in value of sterling will have made a big difference, as the spending power of what immigrants earn has fallen significantly. There may even be some truth in the suggestions that EU based immigration has felt less welcome since the referendum. While net immigration figures were undoubtedly too high, putting strain on our public services, too sudden a reduction will cause serious problems. Our social care and hospitality sectors have been very dependent on immigrant workers for many years. In the agriculture, horticulture and tourism related sectors, too sudden a reduction in migrant labour will have serious consequences. As the UK takes back control of immigration, we must remember the benefits, both economic and cultural that immigration brings.

Glyn Davies
Montgomeryshire MP

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Letters

We must be ready for any outcome

AS the EU continues to be intransigent over Brexit negotiations, the British government should be fully prepared to walk away with no deal rather than agree to a bad deal.

The government would certainly have the support of the British people. According to a new Sky Data poll a large majority of the public believe that 'no deal is better than a bad deal'. A massive 74 per cent agreed the country should walk away rather than

accept a bad, 'punishment' deal. Just 26 per cent think 'any deal is better than no deal'.

As Justice Minister Dominic Raab has said, the UK must 'strive for the very best outcome from these negotiations, but prepare for all eventualities' (BBC News, October 2017). It is worrying, therefore, that the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, has written in The Times that he will only spend money on preparing for a 'no deal scenario' just before such a scenario should arise. The re-

sponsible action to take would be to ensure that we are prepared for a no deal scenario now, and not wait until the last minute.

We hope that the UK and EU negotiating teams will reach a deal that benefits both sides. Indeed, it is in their interest to do so. However if we want to get a good deal, we have to be willing and able to walk away from the negotiations.

IAN BARRETT
Church Stretton

Britain should walk away now even if there's no deal agreed

WE are now witnessing the 'political elite', their friends in the broadcast and print media desperately attempting to remove the 'no deal' option from the government during the Brexit negotiations.

Of course what they want is for the UK to be given a 'bad deal' which they can then overturn in a second referendum.

It is noticeable how they attacked Boris Johnson when he gave positive views about Brexit, he should be sacked they cried. Not so Hammond when he is as gloomy as an undertaker on a wet weekday funeral.

It is interesting the BBC and the others failed to highlight the London School of Economics and Oxford University survey which comprehensively shows 68 per cent of the large 3,293 sample backed so-called 'hard Brexit'.

They are happy to quote any poll that supports 'soft Brexit', also known as remaining in the EU. We should not be surprised, an analysis of tweets sent out by key news broadcasters shows they are very negative about Brexit. It shows in the way they interview remain supporters like Clark and Clegg.

They give their anti democratic views full weight. What of the 'no deal' scenario?

Any negotiator needs the power to walk away, without it you are at the mercy of the other side. That is the position Labour now want to foist on the UK.

'No deal' means World Trade Organisation rules, this is not something we should fear since it is how we currently trade with the rest of the world.

I hope we call the EU's bluff and walk away now.

The UK owes them nothing and we do not need to pay them to trade since they sell us more than we buy from them.

JOHN STRETTON
Albrighton

Nothing has changed at all

ON June 24, 2016 we voted to leave the EU and nothing has happened.

If the government were serious about honouring the result of the referendum, they would have repealed the 1972 Act and adopted World Trade rules.

Then, from a position of strength it would have been up to the EU to negotiate with us, to sell their goods.

Instead we are still in the single market, we are still implementing EU laws and are still following EU directives as well as sending them millions of pounds every day.

The Conservative government have no intention of taking us out of the EU. Can a leopard change its spots, or can a pig fly?

MARK NORWOOD
Whittington

Bygone Times in South Yorkshire

On this new tour for springtime we feature an interesting and attractive selection of attractions. The thriving historic market town of Newark-on-Trent contrasts nicely with Gainsborough's Old Hall, and Sheffield offers the visitor much to see. Combined with a stay in a four star hotel this will be an excellent spring break. Hotel in-house entertainment is provided on two evenings.

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Check out this picture. It was taken on January 22, 1985, and the original caption read: "Still expanding against the Oswestry skyline is the new International Supermarket being built in Station Road. Structural steelwork is still being erected on the site which is due for completion late this year."

Being in this union has ruined our great country

THE 43 years of membership with the European Union has ruined our country, obliterated our Britishness, and destroyed our international reputation for civility, honesty and trustworthiness.

Plus the plain fact that half of the population, including the majority of MPs, MEPs, Peers and the Civil Service, have dispensed with democracy – one of the prime directives of the EU.

How many hundreds of years did it take Britain to eradicate contagious diseases only to have the whole important scheme dismantled by the entirely foolish EU Open Borders policy?

The Tory government response to the 2008 banking crisis is now a dead duck. Austerity is hurting, not working.

Since 2010 austerity has caused the falling living standards of hard working people, ruined public services, forced people to use food banks and made a mess of Britain leaving the EU.

The people of Britain deserve better.

RON JOWETT
Shifnal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Readers' Letters,
The Chronicle,
14 Salop Road,
Oswestry, SY11 2NU

EMAIL

iain.stjohn@shropshirestar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

We deserve a lot better than this

OH dear. The only advice I can give to Mrs May is not to buy a lottery ticket in the near future.

The Tory government response to the 2008 banking crisis is now a dead duck. Austerity is hurting, not working.

Since 2010 austerity has caused the falling living standards of hard working people, ruined public services, forced people to use food banks and made a mess of Britain leaving the EU.

The people of Britain deserve better.

RON JOWETT
Shifnal

The British spirit will prevail in these challenging times

THE cat is now truly out of the bag with Brussels, in the form of the EU negotiators, having little to offer the Brexit negotiations except intimidation, bullying and fear.

Hopefully those who voted to remain in the EU (not to be confused with a Common Market) will now recognise the real face of this dictatorial club – recent events in Catalonia clearly highlighted how the EU interprets and abuses democracy. Remember also when the Danes voted against the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 for greater integration a second vote was instigated to get the 'right' result – then it was the turn of the Irish to be 'convinced' they had it wrong in rejecting the Lisbon Treaty – now it is the turn of the UK to be...er... coerced! Project Fear has been given life again with talk of another blitz from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which is based in Paris – but no doubt the British spirit will prevail.

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Thomas Cook will shut 50 stores

TRAVEL giant Thomas Cook is to close 50 high street shops, putting 400 jobs at risk, just weeks before Christmas.

The closures will affect Thomas Cook and Co-operative Travel branded stores and will take place between now and March.

The company has stores in Oswestry, Whitchurch, Telford and Shrewsbury.

Thomas Cook said the affected stores are either in close proximity to other outlets or are located where a decline in footfall has impacted profitability. A rise in online travel bookings was also flagged as a reason for closures, with the group saying just 47 per cent of holidays were booked in store this year while online sales in the UK grew by 27 per cent.

Breeders warned over avian flu risk

POULTRY keepers are being urged to review biosecurity amid fears that bird flu could rear its head again this winter.

The migration season for birds is in full swing and recently a duck, infected with avian flu, was discovered near the Netherlands border in Germany. Experts say those fattening turkeys and other poultry for Christmas could be at risk.

Breeder, Andy Cathwray, who runs Chicken Street, near Oswestry, said he feared there would come a time when the threat of avian flu was all year round. He urged 'backyard' owners to make sure they were prepared for having to take their birds inside.

Mr Cathwray said: "Owners should remember the bird flu prevention measures last year and make sure they are prepared if it happens again this year."

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CCTV scheme could have extension under plans

AN extension of a CCTV system could deal with trouble hot spots in Oswestry.

Oswestry's town centre CCTV won a national award two years ago.

Now the town council, which runs the system, manned by volunteers, is hoping that a police grant could bring more cameras to the scheme.

The council met on Monday to discuss whether to put more funding into the operation.

Town Clerk David Preston said Oswestry, Cleobury Mortimer and Wem have indicated that they want to bid for money from a special CCTV fund being offered by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

The commissioner says he is committed to supporting CCTV across the region and has pledged to allocate up to £1 million to do so.

Each application must have at least 50 per cent match funding from other sources with funding only available for capital purchases and not revenue costs.

Jim Stafford, Oswestry's CCTV co-ordinator, had suggested the town council put in a bid for £6,500 that would need to be matched by the town council.

A report to councillors said: "The suggested sites are: Castlefields; a mobile camera to use as individual problems occur; a further camera on Gobowen Road or Castle Street, and a wireless upgrade to the system to support the additional cameras that have been added since original installation."

"The available funding for Community Safety Partnerships offers a further opportunity to add to and improve the operation of Oswestry CCTV."

Councillors agreed to make the bid.

Report by Sue Austin

A CHRISTMAS Day lunch has been given a helping hand by a bank.

The Open House lunch in Oswestry has been given 150 chocolate selection boxes and a donation of £50 towards providing a Christmas Day celebration for those in need.

The donation is part of a nationwide Christmas programme by TSB, which is giving every one of its branches money to gift to a local cause, as a little extra support at this time of year.

Rachel Adams from TSB Oswestry, said: "We're delighted to be able to help Oswestry Christmas Day Open House with this donation.

"It provides a Christmas Day lunch, gifts and entertainment to the local community with the aim of tackling social isolation and poverty.

"The lunch is open to senior citizens, homeless and generally anyone that would otherwise be alone.

"It's fantastic to know that the donation we are giving them will really make a difference to people in our local community."

Briony Pickering, retail manager for Chalk, organiser of Oswestry Christmas Day Open House, said: "I'd really like to thank TSB for the team's support.

"It's great to see a national company supporting the communities they serve at such a local level. TSB's donation is really helping us share the Christmas cheer by funding the selection boxes and the £50 donation which will help us to provide Christmas lunch and gifts to people in need here in Oswestry this Christmas."

Councillors agreed to make the bid.

Christmas lunch cheer provided by bank bosses

Artistic help for Children in Need



Artist Stan Jankowski has created the artwork which will help Children In Need

AN artist has created a spectacular wind sculpture to raise money for Children In Need.

Stan Jankowski has given the kinetic sculpture, named Viking, to be the subject of a silent auction run from the Willow Gallery in Oswestry.

People have until noon on December 23 to register their bid which will be recorded on an auction sheet at the gallery. Whoever makes the highest bid wins the two metre high piece of art.

Viking is just one of the many different shapes and designs fashioned by Stan at his workshop near Llanfyllin. The former robotics engineer also handcrafts weather vanes in copper and brass.

He said that drawing engineering and art together, the sculpture, designed to sit outdoors, will vary constantly with the breeze.

"I am hoping for a fantastic result that will help to change vulnerable children's lives for the better.

"Please visit the gallery and see the piece for yourself – or, even better, place a bid," the artist said.

More of his work can be seen on his website at www.pan-jankowski.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ramblers ready for an easy walk

THE Welshpool Ramblers' walk on Sunday will be led by Heather Smith and will be an easy walk of up to eight miles from Ellesmere.

The circular route will be along the Mere, then along field paths to Ellesmere and the Boat House for tea and cake. All are welcome but no dogs on the walk. Meet at 9.30am in the car park beside the Welshpool Tourist Information Centre (OS grid ref. SJ 225075), from where transport may be available, or at the start of the route at the Castlefields car park opposite the Mere (OS grid ref. SJ 407344) ready for a 10.30am start.

Active buddies scheme launched

A MENTORING scheme to help older people become more physically active has been launched in Oswestry.

The Active Buddy Scheme that has been set up in the town has already given training to mentors who have volunteered to accompany people to their chosen activity for the first few weeks. It is now appealing for people who would like an Active Buddy to come forward.

Susie Hancock, programme co-ordinator, from Shropshire Rural Communities Charity, said it was inviting older people to become more physically active.

"Leisure centres, gyms, exercise classes and sports clubs may seem scary places for people who are not used to exercising," she said.

People who would like an Active Buddy should contact Susie.Hancock@Shropshire-rcc.org.uk or call (01743) 342160.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Petition for injuries unit

A PETITION has been started to bring a 24-hour minor injuries unit to Mid Wales.

Pleas have long been made, led by health campaigner and County Councillor Joy Jones, to bring a 24-hour service back to Newtown.

Currently there is a day service and patients overnight have to travel to Welshpool or on to the A&E at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Councillor Jones said the people of Newtown don't want to feel like "second class citizens" anymore.

She said: "Newtown needs a new all under one roof medical centre open 24/7."

Change for bank van visiting time

NATWEST Bank has announced changes to the times its mobile service will be available in Welshpool from Monday.

The NatWest mobile bank van is currently situated in the town end of Tesco's car park on Mondays between 2pm and 2.45pm. This time will be changing from Monday to 1.30pm to 2.30pm.

This service is supported by community banker Mark Longman at these times.

"I also have a weekly drop-in service on Mondays in the Judge's Retiring Room, which is upstairs in the town hall," said Mr Longman.

"Times are usually between 10am and 4pm."

"Any change in my times are normally displayed on a board outside the Town Hall."

Police strategy is aimed at reducing rural crime

Report by Jonny Drury

A RURAL crime strategy has been launched by Dyfed-Powys Police in a bid to keep the most remote areas of communities safe.

The aim of the strategy is to protect rural communities through crime prevention, intelligence gathering, enforcement and reassurance, as well as addressing issues around hidden harm and vulnerability.

The force has vowed to develop the specialist rural skills and knowledge of police officers, staff and special constables, to maintain a visible presence and provide an effective response to crimes and incidents in rural and farming communities.

In 2016/17, Dyfed-Powys Police recorded around 500 crimes that had been committed on farms.

These offences included burglaries targeting agricultural buildings and fields, with livestock, quad bikes, trailers, machinery, gates, tools and scrap metal stolen, as well as criminal damage caused to crops, land, buildings, fences, machinery and other property.

Superintendent Robyn Mason said: "The force area is incredibly diverse in its make up, and it would be impossible to target crime in all areas in the same way. Isolated communities and remote locations can be made vulnerable by their very nature, and a responsibility is placed on policing to respond to these challenges."

Award recognises group's work



Russell George with Emma Davies and Janet Pitcher at the presentation

AGE Cymru Powys has been awarded with an Age UK certificate of achievement, recently presented by local AM, Russell George.

Mr George, Assembly Member for Montgomeryshire, was delighted to present the certificate of achievement to the Age Cymru Powys information and advice team for the quality of the information and advice it provides after a rigorous assessment process.

Following a successful inspection which looked at the management of the service; the way in which cases are managed; and the way information is provided and recorded, Age Cymru Powys met all the requirements of the Quality Mark.

After presenting the award to the team, Mr George said: "I was delighted to be asked to present this award to the Age Cymru Powys Information and Advice Team and I would like to congratulate all members of the team for their achievement."

Emma Davies and Janet Pitcher attended the presentation to receive the certificate from Mr George.

Teenager faces trial on sex offence allegations

A WELSHPOOL teenager who has been charged with a series of sexual offences against under-aged girls will go on trial in May next year, a court has agreed.

Kieran Mark Goodwin had already been charged with raping an under-age girl and five other offences.

But last week he faced an additional 19 charges.

Judge Rhys Rowland was told that there were now seven complainants and 18 prosecution witnesses involved in the case.

He remanded the defendant in custody pending trial.

No bail was applied for during the hearing at court.

Goodwin, 18, of Little Henfaes Drive, Welshpool, has denied a series of offences.

The allegations include causing a child to watch a sexual act, inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, and facilitating the commission of a child sex offence.

But the Welshpool teenager admitted three charges of sexual activity with one child.

In the second case, he denied one charge of rape and five counts of sexual activity with a child.

Judge Rhys Rowland agreed in court that all matters should be tied up in one case.

He adjourned the plea hearing for a week so that it all administrative matters could be completed as a single case.

Defending barrister Matthew Curtis did not apply for bail during the court hearing.

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Firefighters to burst into song

ONE of the most well-attended events on the Mid Wales Christmas calendar will take place this weekend, organisers have said.

Welshpool Fire Station's 26th annual carol service is this year raising money for the Wales Air Ambulance and Fire Fighters Charity.

The service will feature the Buttington Musical Theatre Company.

The event will also feature Welshpool Church in Wales Primary School, the organisers said.

The annual carol service will take place at St Mary's Church on Saturday at 7pm.

"The crew from Welshpool would like to extend their sincere thanks for the continued support that we receive from our community," said watch manager Brendan McWhinnie.

Diocese joins up with trust board

THE Oswestry-based Marches Academy Trust has announced the Diocese of Lichfield has formally joined the trust with Colin Hopkins, director of education, as its representative on the member's board.

The Diocese of Lichfield provides support services for its church schools enabling schools to access advice, information and professional support on collective worship, spiritual care, religious education and the development of a school's distinctive character.

This announcement follows the news of The Marches Academy Trust's sponsorship of Tilstock Church of England Primary School and Nursery from December 1. Sarah Longville, from the trust, said: "This is an exciting time for us as we become a mixed multi-academy trust representing both community schools and church schools."

Report by Jonny Drury

STAFF and residents have been assured over the future of a care home despite a row engulfing its owners.

Meadowbrook Care Home in Gobowen is operated by Four Seasons, which is trying to avoid administration as its main lender and private equity owner clash in a £186 million tug of war.

A legal row has erupted over whether 24 care homes are part of Four Seasons.

Bosses at US hedge fund H2 Capital, which owns most of Four Seasons' £525million bond debt, claimed it had control of the assets, which were bought by Terra Firma in 2014.

But private equity firm Terra Firma, which has ownership of Four Seasons, has rejected this.

The 24 extra care homes were purchased separately and it is argued they are not part of Four Seasons.

As the dispute continues Four Seasons has assured the 78 staff and 46 residents at Meadowbrook that they are safe.

A spokesperson for Four Seasons said: "Negotiations in respect of the capital and share structures at the top level of the organisation should not directly have any impact on our residents and staff and the day to day operations of our homes and hospitals."

"It is in everyone's interests to preserve the underlying value of the operating business."

The financial row is a complex situation, bosses have said, and Four Seasons has also said it is committed to finding a solution, and is working with the Care Quality Commission.

Old church to be IT company HQ



Bluestonex is transforming a former church building in Oswestry

A FORMER church building in Oswestry is in the process of becoming the headquarters of an IT software and consulting company and it could soon be expanding.

The building in Market Gate has been run as a gym previously and is now being refurbished as the headquarters of Bluestonex.

The company, which helps to create innovative software for large firms, has already moved into its new premises from its previous base at Park Hall.

Phase two of the operation has begun with ground floor offices leased with other meeting rooms available for an hourly rate.

Dan Barton from Bluestonex said: "It is the perfect cultural site for what we do – space, light and a mixture of old and new aesthetics."

"It is a great location, too. Oswestry is a good place and we want to bring people into the town and employ local people here."

The firm, which creates and designs interfaces for SAP enterprise software for companies such as Arla foods and Princes foods, is five years old and has around 25 employees both in Shropshire and in India.

Hope of new lights after tragic death of teenager

LIGHTING and fencing could be installed near a showground where a promising cricket player died.

Work at the Groe in Builth Wells following the death of James Corfield, from Montgomery near Welshpool, during the Royal Welsh Show is being considered, the town council has been told.

Builth Wells county councillor Jeremy Pugh said lighting would not only improve safety, but would also enhance the look of the park area. He added that fencing at the bottom of the Groe might deter someone from going into the river.

Councillor Pugh told a recent meeting of the town council that he was going to try to push for lights at the Groe and that he had the chance of a significant grant to do the work.

He said the problem would be in getting an electrical feed to the lights, and the nearest place at the moment was the town council's toilets on the Groe. Councillor Pugh said he had looked at solar lights but he was concerned that there might not be enough light coming through to keep the solar panels going all year round.

Councillor Pugh said if there was a physical barrier to the river, while people might try to get over it, it might equally deter someone from going into the river.

He said he would pursue both issues and report back to the town council in December.

Nineteen-year-old James's body was recovered from the River Wye in Builth Wells in July.

He had not been seen since he left the White Horse pub in the town five days earlier. The teenager, who lived on a farm in Montgomery, had been attending the Royal Welsh Show.

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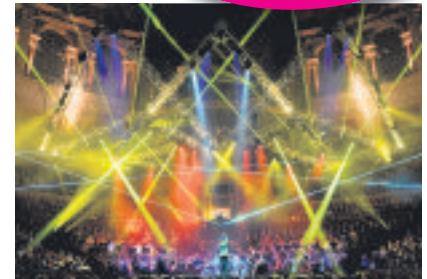
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14 Unemployment rate falls for a second month

UNEMPLOYMENT in Shropshire fell for a second month in a row, as the national jobless count fell to its lowest rate in 42 years.

The latest claimant count figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that 50 fewer people claimed unemployment-related benefits in Telford & Wrekin in October – taking the total to 1,875.

This represents 1.7 per cent of the workforce. In the Shropshire Council area, the claimant count dropped by 30 to 1,965, meaning that 1.1 per cent of the workforce was receiving jobless benefits.

The 680 people claiming benefits in Powys was down five from the previous month's figure, leaving the Mid Wales county with a claimant rate of 0.9 per cent.

Gareth Niblett, Job Centre customer services manager for Shropshire, said there were a number of job opportunities coming up in the county over the coming weeks.

Recently B&M Retail in Oswestry had six retail customer service assistant opportunities while KFC in Oswestry had eight vacancies. Unemployment continued to fall in the West Midlands in the three months to September with 8,000 fewer out of work.

Mr Niblett said: "Christmas seasonal recruitment is still ongoing, we are helping Clinton Cards, the Card Factory and Greggs to recruit."

Events set to remember poet 100 years on

SHROPSHIRE will be at the centre of a large-scale commemoration next year focused on famous war poet Wilfred Owen.

Owen, who was born in Oswestry and raised in Shrewsbury, fell in battle during the First World War.

The centenary next year will be marked in his home county by a series of events over 100 days, from August 4 to the anniversary of the Armistice on November 11.

With a focus on Shrewsbury and Oswestry, Wilfred Owen 100 will remember him with poetry readings, music, talks, new installations such as a mural at Shrewsbury station, themed guided walks and more.

Lezley Picton, Shropshire Council cabinet member for leisure and culture, said: "Shropshire played key role in the First World War effort, with support provided at home and the supply of brave soldiers to the frontline, such as the famous Wilfred Owen."

"With the anniversary of his untimely death, I am delighted that Shropshire Archives and Shropshire Council's Arts Service are working with partners at Shrewsbury Heritage to ensure that Wilfred Owen and his works are celebrated and remembered through a series of interesting and exciting events, while also paying homage to our county's significant contributions during the Great War."

Owen was born in 1893 at Plas Wilmot, near Oswestry, and died in Birkenhead and Shrewsbury, where his mother received news of his death as the bells were ringing out on Armistice Day.

Students given puppetry hints

YEAR 9 art students from The Marches School in Oswestry have visited artist Russell Kirk's puppetry workshop in Chester.

Students explored the history of Chester's parades dating back to the 14th century.

They gained an understanding of how the puppets move in order to start designing their own.

Fifteen students will now begin to make their own puppets.

The puppets will feature in the Chester Winter Watch Parade.

The winter watch parade, a free event, is taking place on December 14 in Chester city centre at 7pm.

Laura Herald, art teacher at The Marches School, said: "Students were in awe of the workshop, interacting with these master crafted puppets."

"What a fantastic opportunity for our students at The Marches School to get involved in the Chester Parade, to make their own puppets and then be a part of the action."

Volunteers' work brings improvements to the rights of way network for walkers

Report by Jonny Drury

SEVERAL communities in north Powys are beginning to see improvements to their rights of way network thanks to a grass roots project being led by local volunteers.

A small team of volunteers, part of the Vale of Montgomery Rural Cluster Group, have started to maintain local rights of way in the area.

The work started after the volunteers received health and safety training from Powys County Council.

The grass roots project aims to enable communities to take an active role in managing local countryside access and to take ownership of the rights of way network.

The cluster group encompasses the areas of Abermule, Berriew, Dolfor, Forden, Kerry, Leighton, Llandyssil, Sarn and Trelystan com-

munity councils and Montgomery Town Council.

The group's initial work focused on routes being used by the Montgomery Walking Festival.

That work included the refurbishment of a footbridge as well as vegetation clearance and waymarking in numerous locations.

Some of the routes used by the Montgomery Walking Festival will now form the basis of a set of publicised walks that will be available as brochures and downloadable online and this could form a model for the surrounding communities.

Jill Kibble, chair of Walkers are Welcome Montgomery and vice-chair of the Vale of Montgomery Rural Cluster Group, said she was pleased with the progress so far.

She said: "Our aspiration of taking control of local footpaths and bridleways is now beginning to show results."

"We're already planning another volunteer induction day as several people have approached us who want to help and make a real difference."

"With the success of the Montgomery Walking Festival behind us, we will now focus on routes in the Kerry area."

"Initial surveys have already revealed that there is maintenance work to be done in order to bring these routes back up to standard as a

number of stiles have reached the end of their lifetime."

Councillor Jonathan Wilkinson, Powys County Council's cabinet member for countryside services, said: "This fantastic project is starting to make a real difference to the rights of way network in this part of the county."

"The work of volunteer teams is essential to ensuring that popular routes remain safely useable and becomes more invaluable to the community."

Anyone interested in getting involved in the project or who want to know more about the work should contact Phil Johnson, the community delivery officer for the project at phil.johnson@powys.gov.uk, call 07779 989967 or talk to their local community councillor.

Half of voluntary services are at risk, new report finds

Report by Deborah Hardiman

MORE than half of the services run by voluntary organisations in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are under threat.

That is the warning from the voluntary sector, which says 57 per cent of activities – including day centres and sessions set up to tackle isolation, and advice to help people live independently to reduce their need for statutory care – are at risk of closure or reduction due to pressures on local authority budgets.

And it says the loss of services would have a devastating impact on the community.

The warning comes after the results of an impact assessment were published into the preventative work being done by 15 organisations, including Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin.

The report concludes that preventative services are at risk in the next 12 months unless more funding is found.

The stark appraisal comes after Shropshire's Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly investigated the impact of proposed cuts to Shropshire Council's Adult Services Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) prevention budget.

Shropshire Council has used its reserves to offer a two-year extension on existing VCSE prevention contracts awarded through adult services until 2019.

But ongoing government cuts will leave the council with approximately a quarter of the funding that paid for more than 150 services in 2015.

By 2020 the £44m revenue support grant that is paid to councils to help provide services will end.

Heather Osborne, chief executive of Age UK STW, said: "The voluntary sector is facing significant increases in demand as a result of social and economic issues, welfare reform, changing models of care and a reduction in public spending."

Reduced funding to the sector will result in the loss of social activities, which are critical to people's health and wellbeing, particularly in a large rural county like Shropshire.

"It will lead to social isolation, an impact on carers, an impact on the wider community and generate increased demand for public sector services. We know the council is faced with impossible choices and hope to work together towards solutions."

Town rocked by death may host Knife Angel



From left, John Morris area manager for Walsall Council, Police youth officer Simon Bradley and Sergeant Leigh Hale.

A SCULPTURE made of confiscated or surrendered blades could make its way to Walsall.

It follows the death of Reagan Asbury, aged 19, who was stabbed in the neck in an incident at a boxing match at the town hall in October.

A delegation visited the British Ironwork Centre, near Oswestry, to kick-start inquiries over whether it could take The Knife Angel to the town.

Created by sculptor Alfie Bradley, the sculpture has become known as a monument against violence and aggression.

It won a peace award at this year's Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod and has won the backing of police forces throughout the country.

It is made from tens of thousands of blades from weapons confiscated by or surrendered to police as part of the Save a Life, Surrender Your Knife, campaign.

West Midlands police officers Walsall youth officer Simon Bradley and Sergeant Leigh Hale, along with John Morris, area manager for Walsall Council, met Clive Knowles, the centre's chairman, to discuss the prospects of the monument visiting Walsall's Art Gallery.

Mr Knowles said: "The discussions were positive and the group has returned to the West Midlands to talk to the recently appointed chief executive of Walsall Council Dr Helen Paterison.

"Whilst knife crime is generally low in Walsall, the delegation believed the monument would be the perfect vision for young people to see and for the greater national blight to be illustrated to them, through this unique piece of art."

He said a number of cities had expressed an interest in hosting the statue.

Assaults on police officers increase by 10 per cent

THE number of assaults on West Mercia police officers has increased by 10 per cent in the last quarter, new figures have revealed.

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion is now calling for communities to support the Behind the Badge campaign – an initiative launched earlier this year in a bid to reduce assaults on officers.

Mr Campion said: "Highlighting this issue is a continued priority for me and whilst I'm pleased to see this being raised at a national level with the Assault of Emergency Workers

Bill, there is still a lot more that we can do as communities to ensure dedicated and professional officers and staff, return safely to their families and loved ones."

"Violence against police, or any emergency services workers, is never acceptable."

"It's important the people can recognise the long lasting impact that assaults have, and that negative behaviour displayed by a minority is challenged. I promise to continue to engage, with our communities, so we can continue to protect those who protect us."

Between April 2015 and September 2017, there were 1,427 reported offences on duty personnel.

In the most recent quarter, from July to September, there were 184 incidents, up 10 per cent on the previous quarter, which equates to two each day. Assistant chief constable Martin Evans said: "Police officers do an extremely difficult job in often challenging circumstances."

"Our officers and staff have a right to come to work and do the job the public ask of them."

"Committing an assault against a police of-

ficer is totally unacceptable and we will protect our workforce from injury by arresting anyone suspected of this, ensuring any incident will be fully investigated and appropriate action taken."

The second phase of the campaign focuses in at local level, encouraging community groups and local leaders to engage. The most common time for assaults against police to occur is in the early hours of Friday and Saturday mornings, so Behind the Badge will now focus on the night time economy.



Regular stallholder Izzy Hoskin from Pennant Valley Game



Students Liam Jones, Craig Wheeler, Trish Rahman and Arabella Evans



Regular stallholder Amanda Woof with her handmade scotch eggs

Youngsters market their best ideas

THE business brains of the future have been setting up stalls and selling goods in Oswestry as part of their business studies.

Students at the town's North Shropshire College took up seven market stalls on a recent Friday street market.

The move was the culmination of a project to set up and run a successful business.

The students are all studying business at the Oswestry campus.

They rubbed shoulders with experienced traders who attend the market on a regular basis.

The students said that running a real venture gave them a true insight into retailing.

Lucy Edwards, lecturer in business, said the students were all taking part in a £5 challenge.

She said: "As part of an assignment they were all challenged to start with £5 of their own money and use it to set up a business.

"They had to decide on their product and take into account all the costs involved in running a business.

"Being able to take this into the real world by running a market stall was an

Report by Sue Austin

excellent opportunity. We are very grateful to Oswestry Town Council and the other market traders."

The young stallholders were selling goods ranging from candles and bath bombs to cakes and jams, sweets and hot chocolate.

Some of the businesses donated their profits to charities including Hope House Children's Hospice which is based at Morda near Oswestry and the Guide Dogs charity.

Students on the media course at the college also got involved during the day.

"They came to the market, interviewed the regular traders and are to produce a video to promote the Oswestry market," Miss Edwards said.

Meanwhile, the students were kept busy in November when they took part in Global Entrepreneur Week. The event is run in 69 countries and provides an opportunity for students to explore business start-up opportunities through both national and global activities.

As part of the week's events, the college students had the opportunity to listen to a series of talks from business owners about starting their own entrepreneurial business.



Andrea Hall from Top Bathbombs Shropshire



Students George Keay and Kimberley Evans at the market

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Firm gives out advice on grants

ROGER Parry and Partners are urging rural food and tourism businesses, or farmers considering diversifying into food processing or tourism, to apply for new Rural Development Programme England grant funding.

A total of £3.5 million is on offer for rural tourism infrastructure, food processing and business development through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Grants from £17,000 to £35,000 are available to small businesses and farmers who want to diversify into tourism, develop food and drink outlets or develop tourist attractions.

Expressions of interest have to be submitted by midnight on January 31, the firm says.

To book an appointment with the firm call its offices either at Oswestry on (01691) 655334 or at Welshpool on (01938) 554499.

Apprenticeship move by council

PEOPLE in Powys will be able to benefit from new employment opportunities after a scheme was launched by the local authority.

Powys County Council has for a number of years offered fixed-term apprenticeships and now it has launched a new career-graded apprenticeship.

A career-graded apprenticeship is set over an agreed period with proportional pay. On completion of the apprenticeship, individuals take up a permanent position on full-pay.

This contrasts with fixed-term apprenticeships which are offered for a specific time period but with no guarantee that suitable permanent employment will be offered.

Kidney op couple look forward to the future after testing times

NICOLA and Adrian Hill are looking forward to Christmas after a life-changing three years.

In 2015 Nicola, aged 47, was able to give her husband a new lease of life, when she donated one of her kidneys to him.

Born with one kidney, the 49-year-old faced a life on dialysis when it failed, but, unbelievably, while his own brothers' organs were not a match, Nicola's was.

Their life-changing experiences have left Nicola adamant that the English Government should follow Wales in asking people to opt out, rather than opt in to the national organ donation scheme.

They have also left the couple, from Oswestry, determined to raise as much as possible for the charity Kidney Care UK.

In recent weeks they have helped organise a ball in aid of two cancer charities and accepted a cheque for £2,233, from a trio of cyclists who completed a 60-mile bike ride for the cause.

Bob Martin, Mark Millington and Ed Tomkiss, cycled from The Inn on the Green in Shrewsbury to the Ponsonby Arms in Llangollen and back again to the pub for a charity night.

Nicola said: "Bob only heard about our story when he bought tickets for the charity ball.

"He contacted us to find out more and then said they would do their cycle ride for Kidney Care.

"People have been amazing, so generous in helping us to raise money."



Nicola and Adrian Hill of Oswestry are looking forward to the future after a challenging few years

The couple have raised more than £5,600 since the transplant.

"The operation was two years ago last August and we are really just able to look forward," said Nicola.

"It has been a rocky road with Ade having a lot of hospital admissions and not long ago returning to work.

"Things are now beginning to settle down, to be able to get out and about

and socialise and start living our lives again.

"Check-ups, for both of us, are still on-going and will be for a long time."

As well as raising money they couple want to raise awareness of organ donation.

She said: "I want England to follow Wales in introducing an opt-out rather than opt-in scheme."

"Having spent so much time in the transplant unit I have seen the big increase in the number of transplants since Wales started their scheme."

"I am living with one kidney very healthily. If I had a spare one, I would donate it to save someone else's life."

To help the Hills' fundraising efforts, you can donate at: https://www.justgiving.com/n-hill?utm_id=35

Attractions feature on interactive canal guide

AN interactive guide to celebrate the history of the UK's waterways, including the Chirk Aqueduct and Pontcysylte Aqueduct near Oswestry, has been launched.

Insure4Boats and the Canal & River Trust have launched the 'History of the Waterways' which depicts how the nation's canals have changed over the past century across England and Wales.

With the invention of modern technology and engineering, many of these canals and hotspots are still in working use and regularly enjoyed by the narrowboat community.

The History of the Waterways showcases navigable points of interest including locks, boat lifts, tunnels, aqueducts, ports, wharfs and basins across Britain with historical imagery dating back to 1900. Insure4Boats have collaborated with the Canal & River Trust, where archivist John Benson from The National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port has given his commentary on each canal hotspot.

Mr Benson, an archivist as well as a canal enthusiast, explained: "As someone who loves the canals and has an interest in labour and industrial history and has benefited from pound the towpaths all my life I'm pleased, on behalf of the Canal & River Trust, to have a connection to this project."

To explore the heritage of the British waterway system, see the Insure4Boats History of the Waterways guide at <https://www.insure4boats.co.uk/historyofthewaterways>

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Boxer Richie adds punch to appeal

Report by Mark Andrews

BOXING hero Richie Woodhall is the latest celebrity to throw his support behind the Chronicle's sister paper the Shropshire Star's Christmas Toy Appeal.

The former super-middleweight world champion urged people to give generously to the appeal which aims to bring a little festive joy to youngsters who might otherwise find Christmas a difficult time of year.

The newspaper is appealing for people to donate brand new toys, games, books and other gifts to the appeal, which will be shared out among organisations which support young people.

Richie, who has lived most of his life in Telford, said he was pleased once again to be able to support the appeal, which this year will be collecting gifts for five charities.

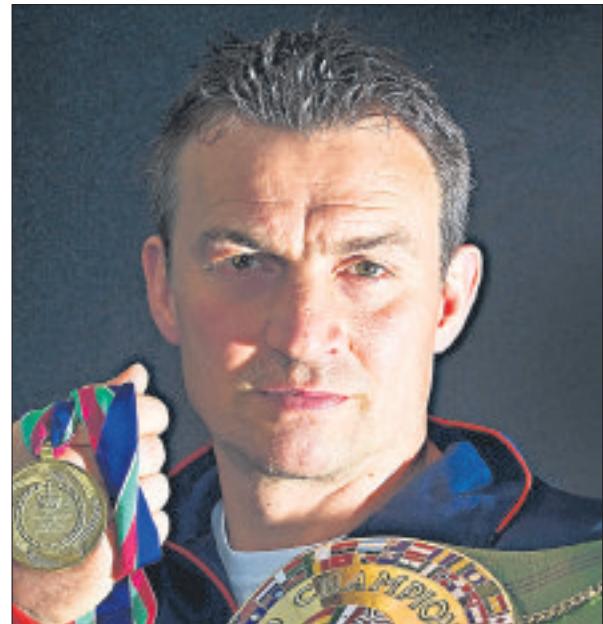
"It's fantastic because it helps so many children," he said.

"I always like to support the toy appeal because it makes so many children happy."

Former Only Fools and Horses star John Challis also urged people to get behind the appeal.

The newspaper is collecting toys for The Movement Centre in Gobowen, which provides pioneering treatment for youngsters with mobility problems, Hope House Children's Hospice in Morda, near Oswestry, and The Harry Johnson Trust for children with cancer.

Telford & Wrekin children's services, and the children's wards at



Richie Woodhall is supporting this year's Christmas Toy Appeal

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals trust will also share the gifts.

Last year's appeal saw more than 1,200 gifts donated to good causes around the county, and once again the newspaper is urging people to help

make Christmas special for youngsters who might be finding the festive season difficult for one reason or another.

Toys can be dropped off at the Chronicle's offices in 14 Salop Road, Oswestry.

Council bosses ask for assistance from government to improve children's services

COUNCIL officials have asked the government for help to improve children's services found to have serious failings.

Welsh Government officials are considering a request for a support package from Powys County Council to address the serious concerns raised by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).

A damning report by the CSSIW found that children in Powys had been put at risk due to a series of failings.

An action plan was put in place and the Welsh Government said that if progress was not made within 90 days, it would have to step in.

Council leader Rosemarie Harris wrote to government ministers asking them to exercise their powers to provide statutory support to the

Report by Jonny Drury

council, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Councillor Harris and acting chief executive David Powell have now met with the cabinet secretary for local government and public to discuss the request.

Councillor Harris said the authority's improvement plan is currently being reviewed by the Welsh Government and CSSIW.

She said: "It was a constructive meeting and work is now underway with the WLGA and partners to develop an appropriate support package to support our improvement work in response to the CSSIW inspection.

"We already have an improvement team with experts from key areas in place to support the service on its improvement journey. We have asked the Welsh Government to provide support to help deliver improvement."

"The council has submitted its improvement plan which is being reviewed by CSSIW and Welsh Government officials. We are determined to deliver improvements within the service and will provide regular information on our progress." The council was heavily criticised for the failings identified in the report.

As a result a warning notice was issued to the council under part eight of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The council has since confirmed an interim director of social services and has put in place

an improvement board to oversee the actions of the director and provide constructive challenge.

A Welsh Government spokesperson said: "We expect to work with the local authority to strengthen the proposed actions and ensure the plan provides a realistic, long-term pathway to significantly improved and sustainable Children's Services in Powys."

"A further statement on the scope and timetable for the support package will be provided once it has been agreed and there will be regular updates on progress on both social services and corporate improvement." In their report inspectors concluded: "Children and young people do not appear to be well served by the current arrangements for accessing support services in Powys."

Warning over parking fines at supermarket

A WELSH Assembly Member is warning shoppers not to fall foul of parking penalty charges after a couple in their 80s were hit with a £70 bill for "an innocent mistake" at a supermarket in Oswestry.

Ken Skates was asked for help after his Clwyd South constituency were told they'd breached regulations at the Aldi store in Oswald Road, Oswestry.

The private firm, Private Eye, has since cancelled the fine but Mr Skates wants to make sure others are aware of the system, which requires customers at some stores to input their registration details at in-store terminals. "This couple didn't deny their 'offence' - failing to enter their reg number into the machine - but made an innocent mistake," he said.

"They were visiting the area and were unaware of the rules as neither of their two local stores in the Wrexham area operate this system."

"The gentlemen accepted his mistake, but was a legitimate customer and was threatened with a fine which would have seen his small shop of less than £12 end up costing him and his wife a further £70 for what at worst is a very minor indiscretion."

A ParkingEye spokesperson said: "In this case, Aldi decided to cancel the parking charge as a gesture of goodwill."

Scholarship scheme set up between school and church

Report by Sue Austin

THE strong relationship between Oswestry School and the town's St Oswald's Church is being cemented through a scholarship scheme.

Oswestry School is now offering chorister scholarships in St Oswald's Choir.

This is an opportunity normally only available to choristers of cathedral and collegiate churches and offers young people the chance to combine the education available at Oswestry School with the experience of singing to cathedral standard in one of the finest church choirs in the diocese.

Director of Music Mike Donkin said: "St Oswald's is the host venue for many of the school's major celebratory events. Oswestry School has a strong musical tradition and intends to build this further. These scholarships are intended to both cement the relationship between the school and church and enable the fine musicians of the St Oswald's Church Choir to enjoy an Oswestry School education."

Oswestry School choristers will receive an 85 per cent remission on tuition fees at Oswestry School. There will be extras, charged in arrears, for trips and other activities. £100 per term might be sensibly budgeted, and uniform, about £250 one-off. Application for a scholarship is open to boys and girls aged between 10 and 13 years of age. The main considerations will be the chorister's suitability to represent the church; ability to contribute to the broad musical activity of the school; and likelihood to benefit from the experience. Applicants will expect to serve the church choir to the best of his/her ability and contribute fully to the musical activity of the school.

The scholarship is awarded for the duration of a pupil's schooling, provided that the scholarship conditions are met. There is an annual review of all scholarships before Easter of each year. St Oswald's choristers will be expected to continue to serve the St Oswald's choir excepting breaks permitted by the choirmaster, for example periods of voice change, or by agreement with the headmaster.

A level of commitment will be required by the church choir for Oswestry School choristers.

That commitment will include attending regular choir rehearsals and church services. Auditions will be held in January. To find out more about the commitment required and the scholarship, contact Mr Donkin on (01691) 649933 or e-mail: mdonkin@aol.com – put Oswestry School Choristers in the title line.

Underneath the Arches event in award hope



Fireworks light up the sky during the spectacular Underneath the Arches evening at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct near Oswestry

A SPECTACULAR event at a World Heritage Site near Oswestry has been shortlisted for a top tourism award.

The Underneath the Arches evening at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct was named best visitor event at the North Wales Tourism Awards and now goes forward to the All Wales final.

The team that organises the annual event was up against more than 100 other nominations.

Underneath the Arches began in 2011 and has continued to grow.

The event is a celebration of music and song with a spectacular firework finale which lights up Thomas Telford's magnificent Pontcysyllte

Aqueduct. Organised by Wrexham County Borough Council it is a tribute to the Llangollen Canal World Heritage Site.

Councillor Terry Evans, lead member for economic development and regeneration, said: "This was a terrific result and great for the team having staged it for the sixth year this summer."

"It's a lot of hard working bringing this, and the many other events the team is involved with, together but I know they find it very worthwhile and worth all the effort as so many people get to enjoy this amazing event."

The aqueduct is one of the highlights of the 11 miles of canal that runs from Chirk Bank in

Shropshire to Llangollen named a World Heritage Site.

The canal was built 200 years ago by engineer Thomas Telford as part of the transport system of his time.

It was originally to have carried raw materials out to Ellesmere Port for loading onto ships.

But engineers could not cut through the mountains above Llangollen and the plan stalled.

In June 2009 the canal was granted World Heritage Site status and since then has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

Emergency crews praised for woman's waterfall rescue

EMERGENCY crews have been praised for their bravery after a woman fell and broke her ankle at a remote waterfall.

The walker injured herself at about 1pm at Pistyll Rhaeadr, Llanrhedr ym Mochnant, on Saturday. Calls were made to the emergency services, however the woman faced a six-hour wait on part of the waterfall, until a Sea King helicopter was deployed to take her away to hospital.

Walkers and local volunteers helped the woman, who could be heard screaming from far

away. Phil Facey, who runs the tea rooms at the waterfall, praised the bravery of the emergency crews.

He said: "I want to praise the rescue teams, they did some amazing work in really bad weather conditions."

"The woman could be heard screaming from a long way away and was in some pain for a long time."

"The emergency services got up there and then the helicopter took her away when it arrived.

"It took some skill and manoeuvring to get the helicopter into the valley to be able to take her away."

"They showed great bravery to take the women away, and it just shows what fantastic services we have available to us."

"If they hadn't have acted like they did, we could be looking at a fatality."

A spokesperson for the Welsh Ambulance Service said: "We were called at approximately 1.55pm on Saturday afternoon to reports a walker was injured near Pistyll Rhaeadr, Lla-

rheadr ym Mochnant. We sent a crew in an emergency ambulance and a Community First Responder to the scene."

Conditions were difficult for the emergency services as the daylight began to fade at the end of the rescue operation. Mr Facey issued a warning to walkers to take care when they climb the waterfall at this time of the year.

He said: "Make sure you have all the gear you needed. If you do break an ankle you only have a limited time up there, so people need to take care."

New business for young mum

A YOUNG mum has started her own business with a new market stall.

Danielle Edwards, 24, from Oswestry said when she had her son Sam at the age of 17 and then when she had Benjamin at 19 many people in the community raised their eyebrows.

Now with her two sons at school it is the perfect time to start her retail career, she says.

She has opened a stall, Fyzz, in the Oswestry Indoor Market.

The stall is open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

The business sells bath bombs and other bathroom and beauty products, Danielle said.

The businesswoman said: "I know that some people raised their eyebrows at my age when I had my eldest son but I really enjoyed being a young mum."

"Now they are a bit older and at school opening the business is brilliant."

"The market stall is a really flexible way of working."

"I can fit it around the family and school and it provides a great way to start up a business."

She added: "It has been brilliant to see the community on board and calling into the market."

THE next meeting of Oswestry & Border History & Archaeology Group will be held tomorrow (Friday).

The meeting takes place in the Methodist Church Hall in Castle Street at 7.30pm.

The group members will hear from Andy Wigley, Shropshire historic environment manager.

He will provide a review of recent archaeological investigations in Shropshire.

Dr Wigley's overview will focus on recent archaeological work that has been carried out across Shropshire in advance of development.

Examining Neolithic sites, Bronze Age and Roman cemeteries, medieval town defences and 20th century power stations, his talk should provide a range of new insights into Shropshire's rich and diverse archaeological heritage.

New members and visitors are very welcome.

Full details of Oswestry & Border History & Archaeology Group's lectures are available at Oswestry Library.

They are also available on the group's website at www.oswestry.historichk.uk

For full details of membership or to get involved in the group's activities, people should contact the membership secretary on (01691) 653355 or they are invited to send an email to obhag@historichk.uk

The future of bus service is now in doubt

A MORNING and afternoon bus service between Oswestry and Llanfyllin could end in July when a school subsidy runs out.

Bus company Tanat Valley has been told that Llanfyllin High School will withdraw from a school contract at the end of the current academic year that helps keep the bus on the road. The number 72 public bus from Llanfyllin and the afternoon return service, runs after bringing pupils into Llanfyllin High School each morning and before the end of the school day. It is a result of the controversy over the high school's payment for the home to school transport out of catchment area.

Llanfyllin High School was told in 2016 that it had two years to comply with the regulation, which means the parents must meet the full cost of the bus or lose it.

County Councillor Peter Lewis said: "The school procures the bus to pupils in which means Tanat Valley can use it as a public service bus on the return journey. The school is not allowed to do it any more because of Regulation 5.2." Councillor Lewis said he was now going to call on Powys County Council to step in and subsidise the service, as it does with other routes. Nick Culliford, operations manager at Tanat Valley, said the bus would not be viable without the school contract.

Swimmers are given funding

A GRANT has been given to the disabled swimming club at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

The club was set up in 1992 and runs on Tuesdays to give patients the opportunity to continue improving once their treatment has been completed.

Oswestry Rotary Club approved a request from the Disabled Swimming Club to grant £250 to purchase a sling hoist to help access to the pool sessions for those who require more help.

Jill Cripps, a volunteer and the chairman of the club, visited a rotary meeting recently to receive the cheque and show members what they were helping to supply.

Council makes £2.6m profit from car parks

SHROPSHIRE Council made a £2.6 million profit from parking fines and charges in just 12 months.

The figures showed English councils made a record £819m from their parking operations in 2016/17. They represent income from parking charges and penalty notices with running costs deducted.

Plans for new council houses are start of much-needed investment, architect says

PLANS for 250 council homes in Mid Wales over the next five years are just the start of a much-needed investment in the area's social housing sector, according to architect, Doug Hughes.

Powys County Council has announced it will build the homes as part of a five-year programme, adding to the 5,300 homes it already provides in the county.

Mr Hughes, principal architect and managing director at Newtown-based Hughes Architects, said: "The investment by Powys County Council demonstrates the importance of social housing to the authority and the need for such housing in the county, as well as the much wider region.

"There have been a number of smaller developments undertaken throughout the county by Mid Wales Housing, Wales and West Housing and others over recent years, which when combined, are providing much needed homes in some of our more rural communities here in Mid Wales, as well as larger towns, such as Newtown and Llandrindod Wells.

"There remains considerable demand for social housing in the region, as there does throughout Wales, and more investment is still needed for such provision."

"We have been working with private developers and housing associations to address this and have worked on several schemes in north

Powys to help bring such stock forward. These include the former magistrates court development in Back Lane, Newtown, and at the former social club site in Welshpool where plans are currently being considered.

"We're also pleased that a development of 24 apartments that we designed for the former bowling club site in Newtown will also form part of Powys County Council's investment in social housing.

"Work on this development will begin in the spring of next year."

Mr Hughes said the private sector remained important to the provision of social housing by bringing forward land for such development and working closely with the county council and housing associations.

He said: "We'd like to see more collaboration to bring forward brownfield sites in the area for social housing."

"This can be achieved by working together – the private and public sector working towards the same goal."

"This can be seen in such developments as those in Newtown that can act as a blueprint for others, such as the former social club site in Welshpool."

"But much more needs to be done and we look forward to working with partners and others to address this in the area."

The move by Powys County Council to build new properties means the authority will be building new council homes in the area for the first time in 25 years.

Police want tip-offs from public to catch drink-drivers

Report by Jonny Drury

A POLICE force will be focussing on tip-offs in a bid to clamp down on drink-drivers.

During their summer campaign to catch drink-drivers Dyfed Powys Police tested 1,600 motorists fewer this year than they did the previous year, which resulted in fewer positive tests.

However, the percentage of positive tests has jumped from 3.2 per cent to 5.9 per cent in 2017.

Police and Crime Commissioner Dafydd Llewellyn said police tactics have now changed.

He said the police officers are using an intelligence-led approach to detect drink-drivers.

The police boss said the new approach is a more effective and efficient way to catch people breaking the law.

The crime commissioner said: "In the past, there was an element of randomness to stop-checks. There was a lack of being as efficient as they could be.

"They should be intelligence-led and less random."

Questions have been asked about frontline cuts to policing numbers being the reason for fewer people being caught drink-driving.

In 2016, 9,500 tests took place throughout Wales, however that number was down 4,600 last year.

In the Dyfed-Powys force area, the number of tests dropped to 1,133 from 2,751.

The number of roadside tests is down across England and Wales, and the Police Federation admitted breath tests are a cause for concern across the UK.

Jayne Willits from the federation said: "To keep members of the public safe we need to have roads policing officers targeting the 'fatal four' which includes drink/drug driving.

However, numbers of dedicated roads policing officers has almost halved since 2000, with just under 4,000 now working across England and Wales."

However, Mr Llewellyn has reassured Mark Collins, chief constable of the force, that the dip in breath tests carried out was not down to falling police numbers.

He is now calling on members of the public to tip off the police about suspected drink-drivers.

He said: "If Dafydd Llewellyn has been sitting in a pub drinking all evening and then gets in his car to drive home, we would hope his actions would be reported to the police and he would be intercepted before he had an accident."

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The changes "Connecting People – a new generation for regional rail operators", was he said, the biggest change since privatisation.

Mr Paterson is campaigning for an extension of the London to Shrewsbury direct train service north to Gobowen and Wrexham and

Report by Sue Austin

developments undertaken throughout the county by Mid Wales Housing, Wales and West Housing and others over recent years, which when combined, are providing much needed homes in some of our more rural communities here in Mid Wales, as well as larger towns, such as Newtown and Llandrindod Wells.

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The move by Powys County Council to build new properties means the authority will be building new council homes in the area for the first time in 25 years.

Festive fun for everyone at heritage railway



Santa Claus gets ready for Christmas and all the festivities at the Cambrian Heritage Railways station in Oswestry

FATHER Christmas is getting a special helper at his grotto at a heritage railway this year.

Paddington Bear, named after the station in London, is hopping on a train to visit Santa in Oswestry.

The little bear will be welcoming children to Santa's grotto at the Cambrian Heritage Railways' Oswestry Station.

He will be there on Saturdays up until Christmas.

Youngsters will be able to ride the Santa Special train and visit the grotto, receiving a

present from Father Christmas. Festive food and mulled wine will also be available.

The Cambrian Heritage Railways group also runs the Llyncllys Station south of Oswestry.

Here Santa will also be in his special ice grotto off the A483 at Llyncllys crossroads, on Sunday this weekend and on December 17.

All tickets cost £8 and trains will be running from 11am until 4pm each day.

Booking is advisable, for more details visit www.cambridgerailways.com.

Volunteers at the railway are working to ex-

tend the Oswestry line to Weston on the edge of the town. Cambrian Railways owned 230 miles of track over a large area of Mid Wales, with its headquarters at Oswestry railway station. The station opened on May 1, 1860, and the last passenger train ran on November 7, 1966. The last freight train ran in 1971. The Cambrian Railways Society was set up in 1972 based on part of Oswestry goods yard, with the goal to reopen part of the line as a heritage railway. The Cambrian Railways Trust was formed in 1998.

the running of the Wales and borders rail service is expected to be announced this month.

Last month the current operator, Arriva

Trains Wales, announced it was pulling out of the running to carry on with the new franchise.

The Arriva-owned company has run the franchise since 2003.

There are three remaining bidders for the franchise.

The three bidders are Abellio, KeolisAmey and MTR.

The Wales and Borders franchise takes in

many of the services that run through Shrewsbury station including the Shrewsbury to Chester line, Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton and the Cambrian and Heart of Wales lines that run mainly in Wales.

Mr Paterson said: "We need newer, larger, faster, cleaner and more reliable trains. There is just not enough room on these trains at the moment. We must also insist that the new franchise includes a half-hourly service from Shrewsbury to Birmingham Airport and Shrewsbury to Manchester Airport."

Rail services could be in line for boost following talks

RAIL services through Shropshire could get a boost following a meeting in Westminster.

North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson met transport secretary Chris Grayling on the eve of his parliamentary speech in which he pledged to shake-up the country's rail services.

"He gave his full support to my campaign for a 30 minute service from Shrewsbury to Manchester Airport and Shrewsbury to Birmingham to be included in the new Wales & Borders rail franchise," Mr Paterson said.

"I am now to contact Welsh Assembly minister, Ken Skates, as a matter of urgency, to get him on board," he said.

The figures showed English councils made a record £819m from their parking operations in 2016/17. They represent income from parking charges and penalty notices with running costs deducted.

better links between Shropshire and regional airports. He said Mr Grayling was supportive of his pleas for better rail connections.

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The name of the company that will take over

the running of the Wales and borders rail service is expected to be announced this month.

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The Wales and Borders franchise takes in

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY
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Detached house with valley views has large decked area

An individual detached house with valley views and first floor open plan living, Tyn-Y-Pistyll at Garth, Glyn Ceiriog, comes with a large timber decked area, landscaped gardens and woodland.

It is for sale through Morris Marshall & Poole at £374,950. Briefly the property comes with three bedrooms, a shower room and a bathroom. In more detail an entrance hall has solid slate flooring with a curved slate edged recess housing a multi-fuel stove. A further hallway has a plumbed utility cupboard and two storage cupboards.

Being dual aspect, bedroom one has double doors to the outside and ceiling spotlights. Of the two further bedrooms, bedroom three is currently being used as an office. The family bathroom has a modern three-piece suite with a bath, low-flush WC, a pedestal wash hand basin, a tiled floor and splash-back surfaces, a radiator/towel rail and ceiling spotlights.

The shower room/wet room is fully tiled with a plumbed shower, low-flush WC and wash hand basin.

A turning timber-built staircase rises up from the entrance hall to the upper level lobby with a tiled floor and external door to the rear. Access leads through to the living area which has a multi-fuel stove fitted to the slate built fireplace, being dual aspect with a large picture window to the rear and concealed radiators. An open plan approach leads through to the dining/kitchen. This is a fully fitted high quality kitchen with ample floor and wall cupboards, extensive work surfaces, tiled splash surfaces and built-in appliances including a dishwasher, fridge/freezer and extractor hood over the Esse range electric cooker. There is a large picture window off the dining area and doors opening out onto the timber deck area. Outside, the double hard-standing adjoining the property is approached off the lane with an oil storage tank and block retaining wall. A second drive rises up to a gated access into the garden area at the far end of the house. A further gated access is available to the upper garden level.

KEY FEATURES

Individual detached house

Valley views

Large timber decked area

Landscaped gardens & woodland

Three bedrooms



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

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Property sits in a most attractive rural location

WYKEY, RUYTON-XI-TOWNS
£525,000

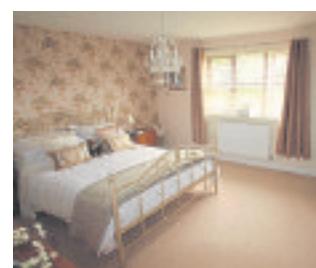
Stone House occupies a most attractive rural location on the outskirts of the small hamlet of Wykey approximately one mile from Ruyton-XI-Towns with its local facilities.

The property, understood to date back to the early 19th century, is constructed of sandstone and part rendered under a slated roof. It has a garden and approximately three and a half acres of land.

The property is for sale through JJ Dell & Co with a guide price of £525,000. Accommodation comprises an entrance lobby, sitting room, dining room, conservatory, kitchen, inner hallway, study/bedroom, rear entrance and shower room.

There are four bedrooms and a bathroom.

Contact JJ Dell & Co on 01691 653437 and 680212.



Property is spacious and in much sought after area

ST MARTINS
£369,950 <<<

A desirable and spacious five bedroom detached family home, Inch Murrin in St Martins, is in a much sought after area.

It is on the market through Town and Country for £369,950 and there is no chain. Local part exchange would be considered. The property is a magnificent family residence which has been built to a high specification throughout and benefits from entrance hall, cloakroom, office/sitting room, lounge, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, two master bedrooms with en-suite and a further three bedrooms and family bathroom.

Viewing is highly recommended to appreciate this beautiful property.

For more details contact Town and Country on 01691 679631.

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RICS



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£139,950

NEW



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£159,950

Two bedroom detached bungalow. Gas central heating, double glazing and a recently installed fitted kitchen with new oven and hob. Parking, detached garage and the rear gardens in particular are quite large for an estate style property. EFC rating = D(56).

Oswestry Office 01691 679595

22 Mandir Close, Oswestry.

Much larger than first impressions suggest, an extended and improved three bedroom family home which was built around 2010 and which is beautifully presented and has been carefully maintained throughout. Gas central heating and double glazed windows. No chain. EPC Rating = 82(B)

Oswestry Office 01691 679595



£164,950

NEW



Plot 32 Meadowdale Llanymynech

£174,950

BRAND NEW HOME TO BE COMPLETED SPRING 2018. A three bedroom detached house with garden, carport and parking to be constructed backing onto the Montgomery Canal on a small development of 35 plots. Located on the edge of the village between the Village Hall and the Canal/Heritage area. EPC Rating: B

Oswestry Office 01691 679595

Plot 16 Oakwood Grange, Morda

£159,950

VIEWS



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2 Glanrafon Cottages

£229,950

Well located in a small hamlet in the Tanat Valley. Affording 2 bedrooms, 2 receptions, kitchen. Oil-fired Rayburn providing domestic hot water. Attached is a single bedroom cottage subject to a protected tenancy - known as number 1. Good sized gardens, range of detached outbuildings. Scope for improvement. EPC rating = 1(G)

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Tyn-Y-Pistyll, Garth, Glyn Ceiriog

£374,950

VIEWS



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2 Sandstone Cottages Knockin Heath

£230,000

Attractive semi-detached cottage built from local Shropshire red sandstone and set in cottage style gardens. G/floor lounge, kitchen/dining room and bathroom and upstairs two bedrooms. Ample parking. EPC Rating = E(52)

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School Lane, Trefonen

£107,500

Semi detached house on an edge of village estate with open rear views. Scope for improvement. Enclosed gardens to both fore and rear. Three bedrooms, bathroom and ground floor wet room shower facility. Through lounge and kitchen with Belfast sink unit. Electric storage heaters and open tile built fireplace. EPC Rating = 37(F)

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Aberdyfi (window display)



Property is an integral part of life in village

RUXTON XI TOWNS
£355,000

One of the oldest homes in the village of Ruyton XI Towns, the Grade II listed timber framed Smithy House is an integral part of the village itself.

Now on the market for the first time in nearly 40 years, this property, which dates from the 17th century, is now for sale through Balfours at £355,000.

Set within a quarter of an acre of mature gardens and grounds, Smithy House has three main reception rooms plus a conservatory, kitchen, pantry and ground floor wet room. Agent, Duncan Scobie of Balfours said: "From the sandstone inglenooks and conservatory base to the wonderful web of timbers, this is a very unique and charming property. It is well laid out with each of the reception rooms of good proportions.

Contact Balfours on 01743 353511.



Country cottage in idyllic setting is beautifully presented

MOELFRE
£380,000

<<<

A beautifully presented three-bedroom detached country cottage in an idyllic setting, Garreg Lwyd at Moelfre near Llansilin has been sympathetically renovated.

Being tastefully decorated and having stunning views towards the Berwyn Mountains and Moelfre Lake, it is for sale through Town & Country at £380,000.

The property is warmed by oil central heating and has double glazing. The gardens are lawned and shrubbed to the front and rear, with a barbecue and seating area ideal for entertaining.

Its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, a living room, a conservatory, kitchen/breakfast room, three bedrooms, one en-suite and a bathroom.

Contact 01691 679631.

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- Kitchen
- Cloakroom
- Large Garden
- Large Rear Garden
- EPC band - JJD988

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LLANGYNOG

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- Views Overlooking The Valley
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- Cloakroom & Utility
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- EPC Band - E
- JJD973

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- Reception Hall
- Breakfast Kitchen
- Conservatory
- Large Living Room
- Four Bedrooms (One En-Suite)
- Garage For Up To 6 Cars
- Large Garage
- Workshop/Annex
- EPC Band - F
- JJD953

GUIDE PRICE £410,000

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- Close Care Residential Bungalow
- Attractive Purpose Built Complex
- CH & DG
- Large/Dining Area
- Kitchen/Breakfast
- Conservatory
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- Rear Enclosed Yard And Garage
- Short Walking Distance From Office
- EPC Band - F
- JD887

GUIDE PRICE £89,950

GLYN CEIRIOG

- Attractive Mid Terraced Property
- Central Village Location
- OCH & PVC DG
- Living Room
- Kitchen/Breakfast
- Two Bedrooms
- Shower Room
- Walk-In Wardrobe
- Loft Room/Office
- Front And Rear Gardens
- On-Street Parking
- EPC Band - E
- JJD978

£140,000

WESTON, NR. OSWESTRY

- Grade II Listed Semi-Detached Property
- CH & DG
- Reception Hall
- Study Area
- Cloakroom
- Modern Dining Kitchen
- Three Bed Rooms
- Bathroom
- Garden
- Parking
- EPC Band-C
- JJD984

GUIDE PRICE £225,000

WYKEY, RUYTON XI TOWNS

NEW PRICE

- Early Nineteenth Century Country Property
- In Total Approx. Three And A Half Acres
- CH & DG
- Three Reception
- Conservatory
- Kitchen & Utility
- Four Bed Rooms
- Bathroom & Shower Room
- Outbuildings
- Gardens & Pool
- EPC Band - E
- JJD985

GUIDE PRICE £525,000

OSWESTRY

- End Terraced House Within Walking Distance Of Town Centre
- GFCH
- Entrance Hall
- Living Room
- Dining Room
- Kitchen And Cellar
- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Rear Yard
- EPC Band - E
- JD981

GUIDE PRICE £139,995

OSWESTRY

SOLD

- Modern Semi-Detached House Convenient For Local Facilities
- CH & DG
- Entrance Hall
- Living Room
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Conservatory & Utility
- Three Bed Rooms
- Front And Rear Gardens
- Garage & Driveway
- EPC Band - C
- JJD975

GUIDE PRICE £155,000

OSWESTRY - TO LET

- Detached House Within Walking Distance Of Town Centre
- GFCH
- Reception Hall
- Conservatory
- Kitchen
- Two BedRooms
- Bathrooms
- Front Lawn. Rear Paved Yard.
- Parking For Two vehicles
- EPC Band - E
- Rent £530
- Deposit £530. Agreement £530.
- References Required.
- JJD032

RENT £530

OSWESTRY - TO LET

- One Bedoomed Flat Convenient For Town Centre
- Spacious Entrance Lobby
- Landing
- Sitting Room
- Dining Kitchen
- Bedroom
- Bathroom
- On-Street Parking Available
- EPC Band - D
- Rent £375 PCM.
- Deposit £375
- Agreement £180.
- JD0068

RENT £375 PCM



Stunning farmhouse enjoys superb views

LLANRHAEDR
£450,000

Clynog, Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant near Oswestry is a stunning Grade II listed farmhouse in an elevated position with outstanding views over the Tanat Valley.

It is for sale through Bowen Son & Watson at £450,000. The property is situated on the outskirts of the picturesque village of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant close to the confluence of the River's Tanat and Rhaeadr in the stunning Berwyn Mountains and near Pistyll Rhaeadr. In brief, the property has a reception hall, music room, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/lounge, kitchen, utility room, rear lobby, coal house, gallery landing, a loft storage room, integral garage, gun room, five first floor bedrooms, a family bathroom, five attics, large gardens and an orchard/paddock.

Contact Bowen Son & Watson on 01691 652367.



Well located property in hamlet comes with cottage

LLANGEDWYN
£229,950 <<<

Well located in the small hamlet of Pentre Felin in the Tanat Valley, 2 Glanrafon Cottages, Pentre Felin, Llangedwyn, comes with an attached single bedroom cottage subject to a protected tenancy, known as Number 1.

Coming with good sized gardens, a range of detached outbuildings and having scope for improvement, it is for sale through Morris Marshall & Poole at £229,950.

The main drive approach off the access lane passes by a range of brick/stone and slate roofed detached stores providing ample storage.

A small section is included with No1 Glanrafon Cottages, and is therefore subject to the protected tenancy status.

Contact Morris Marshall & Poole on 01691 679595 for more details.



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NEW
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NEW
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A SPACIOUS, TWO BEDROOM DETACHED BUNGALOW WITH GARAGE AND PARKING.

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St Martins £159,000
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Llanfyllin Offers over £250,000
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Oswestry £255,000
SPACIOUS DETACHED BUNGALOW, THREE BEDROOM, DETACHED GARAGE.

Llansantffraid £259,950
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Pant £379,500
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Tool offer pair strike at factory

SUSPECTED conmen wanted by police for a tool sharpening fraud have struck at a factory where they demanded £6,000.

Firms are being warned after two men called at Bauromat UK Ltd in Telford after visiting another factory in Oswestry where staff were threatened if they were not immediately paid £3,500.

In the latest incident, closed circuit images appear to have captured two men at the premises in Stafford Park on November 21 where shocked bosses refused to hand over the £6,000 requested, but parted with £2,000.

Since then the visitors are said to have been bombarding staff with phone calls demanding the rest of the cash.

Bauromat's managing director John D'Angelillo said: "They offered to sharpen each tool for £3.75 each which sounded reasonable so we gave them 69 items."

"They brought them back the next day sharpened to a very high standard and we were expecting to pay between £600 and £700, but then they asked for £6,000 for the job and our workshop manager sent for me."

"I told them 'no' we wouldn't pay that much, but the situation became tense so to get them out of the place we eventually gave them £2,000."

The same two men are suspected of visiting the Lindstrand Balloon factory in Oswestry and offering to sharpen drill bits. When the company refused to pay the pair began hounding staff members by phone.

Siblings hit big marathon cash target

A BROTHER and sister have raised £3,000 from a charity rock night ahead of their London Marathon challenge.

Ben Carter and his sister Jessica Pierpoint are running next year's 26.2 mile race in the capital for Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Both had a target to hit and they smashed that as around 200 people packed out The Last Inn, Hengoed, to raise the charity funds.

Acoustic singer Andy Mills kicked off the evening's music, and he was followed by bands All Fire Up and The Kickstones.

The charity event saw £3,000 raised, which helped the siblings hit their fund-raising total.

Jessica was delighted to have raised the money so quickly.

She said: "We didn't expect that many people to come and to raise that much money on the night was amazing."

"I thought we would have to hold a lot more events to both hit the target, but we've done it on the first one."

"I want to thank the Last Inn for donating the room, the bands for all giving up their time, and everyone for coming out and donating their money to charity."

Company backs dementia action

BLUEBIRD Care Shropshire is supporting The Alzheimer's Society tomorrow (Friday) as staff take part in Elf Day to offer support and raise awareness of dementia.

The company provides at-home care to people living in Shrewsbury, Church Stretton, Oswestry and Ellesmere. It will be holding activities at its head offices in Bayston Hill as well as an elf competition for the children at Oak Meadow Primary School and Peter Pan Nursery near Oswestry.

Author at library

AUTHOR Fiona Holland will give a talk at Oswestry Library tomorrow (Friday) between 12.30pm and 1.30pm. She will explore the depth of human history hidden in the very earth beneath our feet.

Picture focus



The spooky Shelly Ramsay Hair and Make Up float in the Oswestry Christmas Parade



The float of local football clubs The New Saints and Oswestry Town



Members of The Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries on their float in the parade

Fabulous festive fun for everyone to enjoy in towns

Report by Dominic Robertson

THOUSANDS of people turned out in Oswestry and Welshpool as the towns' Christmas seasons got into full swing.

Various festive events were held over the weekend to encourage people to come into the towns, enjoy the Christmas spirit and spend some money with local traders.

Oswestry Christmas Live was staged on Friday night and saw the town centre streets closed off to traffic and opened up to thousands of revellers keen to enjoy the Christmas fun.

A huge funfair was set up in the town's streets and proved to be a huge hit with families.

There was a whole host of attractions and activities on offer and many of the town traders stayed open later to capitalise on the additional custom.

The town's market hall was full of traders keen to enjoy the occasion and among the performers were members of the ever popular Porthwaen Silver Band who brought the festive spirit to Oswestry.

Oswestry Mayor Vince Hunt and his Mayoral Amber Hunt even enjoyed a spot of TV fame when the BBC's Midlands Today interviewed them for the news programme.

A fireworks finale finished off a spectacular occasion.

The festive fun continued on Saturday when the town hosted Oswestry Christmas Parade.

Around 30 floats wound their way through the streets of the town on Saturday morning with the crowds treated to displays ranging from Harry Potter and Star Wars, to winter wonderlands and line dancers.

People of all ages lined the town's pavements and scooped up sweets and treats thrown from the floats.

The event was organised by Borderland Rotary Club and the group's president, Sherie Soper, hailed the efforts of those who put together spectacular floats for the parade.

She said: "It is fantastic."

"The children have spent hours with their costumes, practising dances, there is a wonderful Oswestry community spirit about the whole event."

The Chloe Elizabeth Dance Company was one of the floats to claim a top prize with the 'winter wonderland' themed effort being rewarded with the accolade of 'best non-commercial float'.

Chloe Yeomans, who runs the dance com-



Jake and Harley Castle-Green from Gobowen



Oscar Jones and Ella Moss from Gobowen were well wrapped up for the parade

pany and organised the float, said they were thrilled to have been awarded the prize.

Around 30 youngsters were on board the float, which was provided by BJ Clarke of Overton.

Securing the prize was an even greater achievement given that the parents and children only started work the night before.

Chloe said: "Last night we all came and packed up, we all had our jobs and we worked flat out until it was done. The children made the signs and they look fantastic."

"If it was not for everyone we would not have been able to do it so it is really about the community spirit."

"I am so proud of what they have managed to do."

Harry Potter was the theme for the float from Hair and Makeup by Shelley, and the woman behind the spectacular effort said she was delighted with the end result.

Shelley Ramsay said: "I started in May and this is my final year doing a float, I have been doing it for six years now."

"Harry Potter is my all-time favourite movie so I thought it would be good to go out with a bang."

Shelley, who was dressed as Voldemort and was accompanied by a full cast of Harry Potter themed companions, including team of wand-waving mini wizards, said she was thrilled with the final result.

She said: "I am so chuffed with it, I just hope the people of Oswestry like it as well."

The parade also featured floats from Ellesmere Line Dancers, The New Saints and Oswestry Town Football Club, Oswestry Boys and Girls Football Club, 1st Gobowen Scout Group, Border Counties School of Gymnastics, Oswestry District Girl Guiding, North Shropshire College, Oswestry Scout Group, Team Elite Mixed Martial Arts, and the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries.

There was also plenty of festive fun in Welshpool at the weekend.

The town's festive lights display was turned on during a ceremony outside the Town Hall on Friday night.

Welshpool Winter Fair took place on Saturday.

The streets were lined with stalls.

The Ticket



**SHE'S FUR REAL:
CRUELLA IS BACK**

INSIDE

YOUR WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE



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It's challenging to play Cruella de Vil

There's Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk. And there's Peter Pan and Snow White. But those looking for something different for the festive season can head to Birmingham's REP, which is producing a unique version of *The 101 Dalmatians*.

Dalmatians Pongo and Missis enjoy an idyllic life with their humans, Mr and Mrs Dearly. Then one day, the house is filled with the patter of tiny paws when Missis gives birth to a litter of adorable puppies. But just as the Dearlys get used to their new housemates, the puppies mysteriously vanish.

With the help of the canine community and an Old English Sheepdog, Pongo and Missis set out on an adventure to find the missing puppies. Their quest leads them to the vicious Cruella de Vil. She hates dogs but loves fur coats and has set her sights on a certain black and white spotty pattern. Will the animals be able to get home safely in time for Christmas?

The new adaptation of Dodie Smith's delightful 1956 novel is the perfect festive treat and has been brilliantly transformed for the stage by Debbie Isitt, the writer and director of the hugely popular *Nativity!* films.

Tessa Walker has returned to direct the family favourite following her record-breaking 2015 production, *The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe*.

Gloria Onitiri, who plays Cruella, says audiences are in for a treat. The show opened at the end of November and will run until January 13.

"It's great. It's a real story, it's not just a fantasy panto, and it's based on a real piece of literature with lots of depth. People can expect a bit of a spectacle with plenty of morality and right and wrong. It's great."

EXCITING

Though the production is avowedly not a panto a few Christmas rules hold dear – first among them, that such shows only work when there's a great cast.

Gloria says: "Yes, we've got a ridiculously talented group of people on stage. It's a multi-faceted and diverse cast with puppeteers, musicians who play multiple instruments as well as great singers, dancers and actors. It's exciting. Without having to use lots of pyrotechnics – we don't have to 'Baz Luhrmann' it – we've created a genuine spectacle."

The dogs aren't real. Of course. Though Hollywood movie makers might be able to train 101 Dalmatians, the REP's production features an assortment of puppets.

Gloria laughs. "I think when I got cast if I'd have been told it was real dogs, I'd have said no. But the puppeteering works really well."

The actress, who has previously featured on TV's *Doctors*, *Spamalot*, *Grass, Porgy and Bess* and *Bad Girls*, enjoys playing the show's villain.

"Everybody knows the Disney version, but the great thing about Cruella is that she's human. She's had a whole life. So I've had to work out where she's come from and why she feels the way she does and why she is so mean and awful. What's she hiding underneath it all?"

"For me, any character you play, you need to do that with. You need a 3D character. I like people who are challenging. Everyone else would say she's mad and she's mean – I would say she's challenging."

Gloria has enjoyed a fascinating career in which she's featured in everything from *Jack and the Beanstalk* to *Taming of The Shrew* and *The Tempest*. There have been plenty of classics – but she's mixed those with productions like *The Lion King* at The Lyceum.

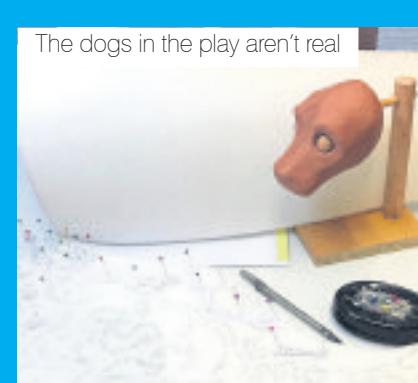
"I don't think it's just because of the dice. I think the diversity has been because I sing as well. I just love a good story, whatever is there in front of me, I'll do it. I also think that by keeping myself as broad as I possibly can, my skills grow. It's about longevity and keeping my options open."

"I'm obsessed with language. I studied English at

It's a dog's life – the cast in rehearsals with the puppets



The dogs in the play aren't real



Gloria Onitiri (Cruella De Vil)



university and I'm obsessed with the root of things and how stories have changed, not just from English culture, but from all cultures. I've enjoyed Shakespeare – Shakespeare is the mothership. I featured at The

Globe in *Taming of the Shrew*, which was phenomenal. There's a tradition that you have to wake up the stage before you start a show and we did a bit of drumming and all sorts and stood in the famous King's spot. It was the first time my cast had been on the stage and I burst into tears because it was so powerful and emotional. It just happened. I did not will it. It is an emotional space. There are parts of the stage you can do a speech and feel comedy will work."

Gloria is glad to be back home for *101 Dalmatians*. She studied at University in Birmingham, leaving in 2006 and being too busy to return. "It's like visiting an old relative. I've felt wonderful being back here. The REP building is just astonishing and everyone is really kind."

The REP is getting into the charitable spirit during the

show by creating a joint fundraising partnership with Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. The city centre theatre will be raising funds during the run of their production of *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*.

There are various fundraising activities planned during the run of the show, which will help to jointly fundraise towards Birmingham Repertory Theatre's million pound campaign REP First and the work of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Twenty pence of every pound raised will go towards the work of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, with the remainder going towards REP First initiatives, such as providing interpreters for the REP's youth theatre in order for Deaf children and young people to take part, as well as allowing the theatre to stage more accessible productions for people with a variety of additional support needs.

Tickets are available from the box office.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see **The Ticket** in your Shropshire Star every Friday.

Funding headache for venue revamp

The revamp of a Midlands music venue is set to smash through its budget by more than £20 million – as council bosses revealed the venue needs a new roof.

The much-delayed project at Wolverhampton's Civic Halls, which started nearly two years ago, was initially slated to cost £14.4m and be completed by March 2018.

But Wolverhampton council has scrapped its initial scheme after 'major issues' were uncovered, with a new electrical system and major structural work required, including a replacement roof.

It is understood it is now set to cost at

least £36m and may not be completed until 2019 at the earliest – although one option on the table is to ditch the revamp entirely.

Wolverhampton council spokesman Oliver Bhurut, said the council was 'reviewing the options' before deciding on how to proceed.

"Plans for the £14.4 million redevelopment of the 80-year-old, Grade II-listed building have begun but work was held up when contractors uncovered major issues," he said.

"We then commissioned much more intrusive survey work to look at these.

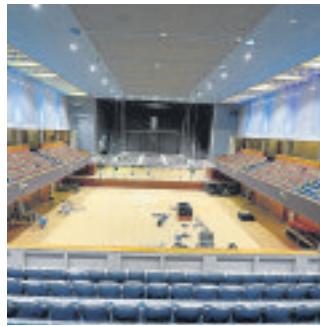
"We now know the scale of the issues we face to return the Civic to its former

glory. This includes a completely new electrical and engineering system, major structural work, including a new roof and the latest safety and security measures.

"We're currently in the process of finalising the costs of this additional work but the project will inevitably cost millions more."

"The council could just continue with the current scheme but we want to ensure that the city has a venue fit for future generations."

"So, before any further works start, we are exploring national and regional funding options that could contribute to what will, in effect, be a much larger project."



Coming soon...

Oliver star Muttley says hello

A pooch has been introduced to the stage ahead of his upcoming performance in Oliver.

Muttley will be performing as Bullseye in Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society's Oliver from March 22 to 26.

Director Rik Pover said: "We thought we would gently introduce Bullseye to the cast through Nancy and Bett before getting him to know Bill who is the show's rough diamond and quite a nasty piece of work."

"Bill, a malicious criminal in Fagin's gang, kidnaps Oliver and so we are leading up to introducing Bullseye to Bill and the rest of the cast with whom he will work during the production of Oliver."

The actors playing Nancy and Bett instantly took to Muttley, who is the fifth generation of champion bull terriers. His uncle has also played the pooch part in a previous production of the show.

Muttley's owners Helen and David Webster, of Monkmoor, Shrewsbury, said: "Taking him along to the first of his rehearsals is all part of getting him used to the music and members of the cast when he appears on stage."

Oliver is Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society's next show at Theatre Severn.

Tickets are available at the theatre's box office either by telephoning 01743 281281 or by emailing mail@theatresevern.co.uk

Giovanni waltzes up for show

A Strictly Come Dancing favourite will be waltzing his way up the A483 into Newtown as part of a UK wide tour.

Giovanni Pernice, who has become a favourite in this year's BBC One competition alongside Debbie McGee, will be at Theatre Hafren in Newtown on April 20.

He is now going on tour with a new dance show called 'Born to Win' and will be joined by seven more professional dancers including Luba Mushtuk as his leading lady.

Luba was most recently seen dancing on the hit show with Giovanni, to the vocal talents of musical theatre star Sheridan Smith.

The show will tell a tale of love and passion, with dances such as the Paso Doble and the Argentine Tango, plus you can expect other favourites like the Charleston, the Viennese Waltz and the Jive, with Giovanni being the current Guinness World Record Holder for having the world's fastest jive kicks and flicks! Strictly Come Dancing has seen Giovanni take 59-year-old McGee to the top of the leader-board this season, including a perfect score of 40 for their Tango in only week seven.

Tickets are now on sale at giovanniperneice.com or directly through the theatres. There are also a limited number of VIP tickets available at most venues, where fans can meet Giovanni before the show.



Stereophonics out on tour

One of Britain's best live bands Stereophonics will embark on a major UK arena tour in February following the release of their album 'Scream Above The Sounds'. Twenty years after their debut 'Word Gets Around';

Stereophonics' tenth studio album released on October 27 via Parlophone Records follows 'Keep The Village Alive' which went straight to number one when it was released in 2015 and became their sixth chart-topper after 'Performance and Cocktails' (1999), 'Just Enough Education To Perform' (2001)

'You Gotta Go There To Come Back' (2003), 'Language, Sex, Violence, Other?' (2005) and 'Pull The Pin' (2007).

'Scream Above The Sounds' was primarily recorded in the band's HQ in west London with a further session at RAK Studios.

Created with the help of regular collaborator Jim Lowe, it's an album in which creative sonic touches add to the band's emphasis on songwriting and melody. Stereophonics will play at the Genting Arena in Birmingham on March 1.



Conducted by Thomas Payne, Shrewsbury Cantata Choir will be performing three pieces of music by German composers including the well-known Brahms' German Requiem.

'All Flesh Is Grass' is the title of the next concert which will take place at 7.30pm on Saturday at St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury.

"We're looking at the emotional roots", said alto and Cantata secretary, Judy Vaughan.

"The idea for a requiem first came to Brahms when he was staying with the famous composer Robert Schumann and his wife Clara.

"Clara and Brahms had fallen in love while Robert was in a mental institution, shortly before Robert died, and this astonishing music was in part the result of that tragedy. It's like no other requiem before it; it's more an act of consolation for the living. The concert will open with a chorale by J.S. Bach whose influence can be heard in many places in the work and then there's a beautiful love song by Clara Schumann, They Loved Each Other – and then the Requiem itself."

"It will help people to enjoy the Brahms Requiem if they hear it in context, and this context, what with Robert's attempted suicide and Clara's genius at the piano, is nothing if not exceptional. Denn alles Fleisch, es ist wie Gras' ('All flesh is grass' in the King James Bible) is the opening line of the second movement".

Judy concluded: "This is beautiful music by consummate composers, so I would welcome people to come along and enjoy what promises to be a splendid evening in Shrewsbury's civic church".

Tickets are £14 and are available via the choir website – www.shrewsburycantatachoir.org.uk

Members of the Shrewsbury Cantata Choir



NOTICE BOARD

needed. For more details contact Sue Box on (01691) 657996. The local theatre company is hoping for success with its pantomime. The two leading characters, The Beast and Beauty will be joined by an array of new friends including posh suitors Toff and Flop, jumpy Mr Shriek the Butler, two terrible dames Agnes and Agnetha, the evil Wizard Demona plus many more. Audiences will have the opportunity to cheer, boo, hiss and even sing along. Performed by a cast of local talent and supported by director Danielle Edwards and new musical

director Steve Gittins, the production is set to be an animated, journey, filled with unforgettable songs from musicals such as Grease, The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Disney's Beauty and the Beast plus more. Performances will take place in the theatre at the Marches School on December 16 and 17 at 7.30pm and December 17 and 18 at 2.30pm. Tickets are priced at £12 adults and £8 for children, group bookings are available for parties of 10 or more. Free parking is available. Tickets are available now online at www.omtc.ticketsource.co.uk and from R.J Christian (Jewellers) Bailey Street in Oswestry.

* ST Alkmund's Church Shrewsbury is the venue on Friday next week at

7.30pm, for a concert titled 'Songs for the Stable' with festive music and readings for Christmas. The Junior Choir of Christ Church, 'Shelton & Oxon', will be singing in the concert. Organist and pianist accompaniment will be performed by John Bowen. The Choral Society will sing a programme of music that will include traditional favourites such as 'It came upon a Midnight clear' and 'In the bleak mid-winter' to modern-day compositions such as 'Candlelight Carol' by John Rutter and 'This endrin night' by American composer Z. Randall Stroope. Tickets are available priced £10 adults, free admission for students/children, online at www.shrewsburychoral.org.uk or from choral society members.

December 9


Casualty

9.20pm
Elle's unruly teenage son Blake (Kai Thorne) gets involved in an off-licence robbery, and Max continues to make a bad impression on would-be sweetheart Polly.


Live Snooker: UK Championship

7pm
Coverage of the second semi-final on the 11th day at the Barbican Centre in York, as the prestigious ranking tournament continues.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.
- 10.00 **Saturday Kitchen Live.** Actress and writer Meera Syal joins host Michel Roux Jr in the kitchen to sample dishes prepared by chefs Olia Hercules and Tom Aikens. Susie Barrie picks the accompanying wines.
- 11.30 **Nigella: At My Table.** Nigella Lawson demonstrates recipes for chicken with red grapes and marsala, a sunken chocolate amaretto cake, mussels with pasta, and egg tortilla pie. Last in the series. (R)
- 12.00 **Football Focus.** Dan Walker and guests look ahead to the weekend's matches, including Manchester United v Manchester City and Liverpool v Everton in the Premier League.
- 1.00 **BBC News;** Weather.
- 1.15 **Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Coverage of the opening semi-final on the 11th day at the Barbican Centre in York, as the prestigious ranking tournament continues.
- 4.30 **Final Score.** Jason Mohammad presents a round-up of the classified results and this afternoon's news from the Premier League, EFL and Scotland. Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. Tom Allen, Sally Lindsay, Kimberly Wyatt and Rick Edwards form the assisting panel as Len challenges two more would-be poets to battle it out.
- 5.45 **BCB News.**
- 5.55 **Midlands Today;** Weather.
- 6.00 **Pointless Celebrities.** Jilly Goolden, Olly Smith, Sophie Grigson Michael Caines, Fay Maschler, Brian Turner, Cyrus Todiwala and Tony Singh compete in a "food and drink" edition of the unorthodox quiz. (R)
- 6.45 **Strictly Come Dancing.** The five couples take to the stage once again to demonstrate their skills in the semi-finals, judged by Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Darcey Bussell and Craig Revel Horwood.
- 8.20 **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** TV presenting duo Marvin and Rochelle Humes hand over their phones for Send-to-All, and pop-rockers The Vamps perform on-stage.
- 9.20 **Casualty.** Elle's unruly teenage son Blake gets involved in an off-licence robbery, and Max continues to make a bad impression on would-be sweetheart Polly.
- 10.10 **BBC News;** Weather; **National Lottery Update.**
- 10.30 **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights from the Premier League, including West Ham United v Chelsea at the London Stadium and Newcastle United v Leicester City at St James' Park.
- 11.55 **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present highlights of Thursday night's game, plus a look at the major stories shaping the NFL world.
- 12.25 **FILM: Someone to Watch Over Me** (1987). A married New York detective falls for the glamorous socialite he has been assigned to protect from a murderer. Ridley Scott's romantic thriller, with Tom Berenger and Mimi Rogers.
- 2.05 **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
- 2.10 **BBC News.**

BBC2

- 6.15 **Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman.** Ainsley Harriott and Len visit Blackpool, Lancashire. (R)
- 7.00 **Nature's Weirdest Events.** A village invaded by billions of tiny crabs. (R)
- 7.30 **Naomi's Nightmares of Nature.** Naomi Wilkinson takes on the Arabian Desert.
- 8.00 **Deadly 60.** A look at the methods animals employ to protect themselves. (R)
- 8.30 **Show Me What You're Made Of: UK.** The children head to a cosmetics factory in south-west England.
- 9.00 **Saturday Mash-Up!** Tom Fletcher and Lindsey Russell join Yasmin Evans, Jonny Nelson and Hacker T Dog for a festive edition of the host Saturday morning entertainment show. Includes episodes of Danger Mouse, Dennis & Gnasher: Unleashed and Odd Squad.
- 11.00 **Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves.** Part one of two. The transportation of exotic animals around the world. (R)
- 12.00 **Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well.** The chef gives a masterclass in baking. (R)
- 12.30 **Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes.** The chef puts his own twist on takeaway food. (R)
- 1.00 **Demolition: The Wrecking Crew.** Hull's tallest building is brought down to the ground. (R)
- 2.00 **Operation Snow Tiger.** Part two of two. Liz Bonnin searches for a tiger that has gone missing. (R)
- 3.00 **Escape to the Continent.** A couple from Devon desperate to find a home in the Algarve. (R)
- 4.00 **Mastermind.** Specialist subjects include Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels and Mahatma Gandhi. (R)
- 4.30 **Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Further coverage of the opening semi-final.
- 5.30 **John Noakes: TV Hero.** A profile of the daredevil former Blue Peter presenter.
- 6.10 **BP Confidential.** Documentary charting Blue Peter's development into a national institution, originally broadcast in 1998 as part of the show's 40th anniversary celebrations. (R)
- 7.00 **Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Coverage of the second semi-final on the 11th day at the Barbican Centre in York, as the prestigious ranking tournament continues. Subsequent programmes subject to change.
- 10.00 **QI XL.** Sara Pascoe, Colin Lane and Jimmy Carr join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig for an extended edition of the quiz show.
- 10.45 **Insert Name Here.** James Acaster, Kate Williams, Ed Balls and Lauren Laverne join captains Richard Osman and Josh Widdicombe to answer Sue Perkins' questions about famous people who share a name. (R)
- 11.15 **FILM: The Cider House Rules** (1999). A doctor's assistant living in the orphanage where he grew up sets out to see more of life, but faces difficult moral decisions. Drama, starring Tobey Maguire and Michael Caine.
- 1.10 **FILM: Borrowed Time** (2012). An elderly recluse forms a friendship with a desperate would-be criminal he catches trying to rob his house. Comedy drama, starring Philip Davis and Theo Barklem-Biggs.
- 2.40 **This Is BBC2.** Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC2.


Ninja Warrior UK

7.15pm
Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the second semi-final, challenging more returning contestants to face the infamous obstacle course once again.

ITV

- 6.00 **CITV: Sooty** 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street
- 6.35 **Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures** 6.45 Super 4 7.00 Mission Employable 7.05 Oddbods 7.10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 7.30 **Scrambled!: Scrambled!** Two hours of children's fun.
- 7.35 **Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show.** Cat and mouse adventures. (R)
- 7.50 **Scrambled!: Fangbone.** Fangbone decides to teach the children Clobberball. (R)
- 8.10 **Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls.** (R)
- 8.30 **Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go.** Scott tries to put a halt to a malfunctioning super-speed device.
- 9.00 **Scrambled!: Wishfart.** (R)
- 9.25 **ITV News.**
- 9.30 **Saturday Morning with James Martin.** With guests Harry Judd and Rachel Allen.
- 11.25 **Gino's Italian Coastal Escape.** The chef returns to the bay of Naples, the area of Italy that he grew up in. (R)
- 11.50 **The Hungry Sailors.** From Mevagissey, Cornwall. (R)
- 12.50 **Thunderbirds Are Go.** Scott tries to put a halt to a malfunctioning super-speed device. (R)
- 1.15 **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 1.25 **The X Factor: Final.** The last two acts battle it out before this year's winner is announced. Last in the series. (R)
- 3.00 **Endeavour.** A professor is killed in a hit-and-run. (R)
- 5.00 **The Chase.** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
- 6.00 **Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs.** Paul meets an unusual looking Staffie cross that cannot find an owner, an English bulldog needing surgery to help it breathe and a German shepherd struggling to keep its food down. (R)
- 6.25 **ITV News Central;** Weather.
- 6.35 **ITV News and Weather.**
- 6.50 **New You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates more comical mishaps recorded by viewers, including a child squashed by a wardrobe, a teenager tumbling off a cliff and a queasy paraglider's selfie.
- 7.15 **Ninja Warrior UK.** Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the second semi-final, challenging more returning contestants to face the infamous obstacle course once again. (R)
- 8.20 **I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** The celebrity survival challenge draws close to its conclusion, and viewers are given one last chance to catch up with the surviving contestants.
- 9.50 **Through the Keyhole: I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** New series. The home-invading panel show returns with an "I'm A Celebrity..." special. With panellists Jimmy Carr, Stacey Solomon, Myleene Klass and Tony Blackburn.
- 10.50 **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 11.05 **FILM: Shaun of the Dead** (2004). An aimless man decides to get his life back on track just as zombies start to roam the streets of London to feast on the living. Comedy horror, with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.
- 12.50 **Jackpot247.** Interactive gaming.
- 3.00 **The Hungry Sailors.** (R)
- 3.50 **ITV Nightscreen.**


Guy Martin's WWI Tank

7pm
The presenter builds a working replica of a First World War tank to mark the centenary of the Battle of Cambrai, and also delves into the history of the earliest armoured vehicles.

Channel 4

- 6.05 **Trail Running: Skyrunner World Series.** Action from the series that features five races in challenging locations.
- 6.35 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Part one of three. Marie gives Debra the silent treatment. (R)
- 7.00 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Part two of three. Marie and Debra's feud continues. (R)
- 7.25 **Everybody Loves Raymond.** Debra and Ray reminisce. (R)
- 7.50 **Frasier.** The Crane brothers set up practice together. (R)
- 8.15 **Frasier.** The Cranes mourn the death of a relative. (R)
- 8.45 **The Big Bang Theory.** Sheldon is interviewed for a Star Trek documentary. (R)
- 9.10 **The Big Bang Theory.** Howard and Raj try to find Sheldon a new girlfriend. (R)
- 9.40 **The Simpsons.** Bart gets into trouble with the Australian authorities. (R)
- 10.10 **The Simpsons.** Homer asks Patty and Selma for help. (R)
- 10.40 **The Simpsons.** The townsfolk hold a film festival. (R)
- 11.10 **FILM: 12 Dates of Christmas** (2011). Romantic fantasy, with Amy Smart and Mark-Paul Gosselaar.
- 12.55 **Come Dine with Me.** The first of week of dinner parties from Manchester. (R)
- 1.25 **Come Dine with Me.** Ryan from Manchester plans a film-inspired menu for his dinner party. (R)
- 1.55 **Come Dine with Me.** Fiona aims to impress with a classy but effortless menu in Cheshire. (R)
- 2.25 **Come Dine with Me.** Laundrette owner Linzi hosts Manchester. (R)
- 3.00 **Come Dine with Me.** Nico sets out to prove the worth of his Italian cooking. (R)
- 3.30 **A Place in the Sun: Home or Away.** A Carlisle couple choose between Central Scotland and Murcia, Spain. (R)
- 4.30 **Best Laid Plans.** Future-proofing a property in Norfolk, and replacing a bungalow in Essex.
- 5.30 **Grand Designs.** A couple transforming a Victorian dairy into a family home. (R)
- 6.30 **Channel 4 News.**
- 7.00 **Guy Martin's WWI Tank.** The presenter builds a working replica of a First World War tank to mark the centenary of the Battle of Cambrai, and also delves into the history of the earliest armoured vehicles. (R)
- 9.00 **FILM: X-Men: Days of Future Past** (2014). Wolverine is sent back in time to change history and prevent a war that has devastated the world. Superhero adventure sequel, starring Hugh Jackman and Jennifer Lawrence.
- 11.35 **FILM: The Drop** (2014). A bartender who secretly works for gangsters gets involved in a robbery gone wrong that digs up long-buried secrets. Crime drama, starring Tom Hardy.
- 1.35 **The Last Leg.** Comic review of the significant moments of the past seven days. (R)
- 2.30 **Holbycocks.** Omnibus. Prince and Sally help each other out.
- 4.40 **Location, Location, Location.** (R)
- 5.35 **Kirstie's Handmade Christmas.** (R)
- 5.55 **3rd Rock from the Sun.** (R)


NCIS: New Orleans

10.25pm
The captain of a private yacht, along with a waiter, are murdered onboard the vessel, and the NCIS agents investigate when it emerges the boat belongs to a drug baron.

Channel 5

- 6.00 **Milkshake!** Little Princess 6.20 Wanda and the Alien 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.35 Wissper 6.40 Milkshake! Monkey 6.45 Milkshake! Bopping About 6.50 Simon 6.55 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.15 Simon 7.20 Milkshake! Bop Box 7.25 Fireman Sam 7.35 Olly the Little White Van 7.50 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.15 Paw Patrol 8.30 Nella the Princess Knight 8.50 Noddy: Toyland Detective 9.00 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.15 Shimmy and Shine 9.35 Digby Dragon 9.50 Peppa Pig 9.55 Peppa Pig 10.00 Olly the Little White Van
- 10.10 **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** The turtles must prove themselves worthy to an aquatic alien queen. (R)
- 10.45 **The Gadget Show.** The best Christmas tech presents. (R)
- 11.40 **Cruising With Jane McDonald.** The presenter embarks on a series of ocean odyseys.
- 11.50 **FILM: A Perfect Christmas List** (2014). Drama, starring Ellen Hollman.
- 1.40 **FILM: A Nutcracker Christmas** (2016). Premiere. Festive drama, starring Amy Acker.
- 3.20 **FILM: Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!** (2014). Premiere. Comedy sequel, starring Martin Clunes.
- 4.20 **5 News Update.**
- 4.25 **FILM: Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!** (2014). Concluded.
- 5.35 **FILM: The Family Man** (2000). Drama, starring Nicolas Cage.
- 6.35 **5 News Update.**
- 6.40 **FILM: The Family Man** (2000). Concluded.
- 7.55 **5 News Weekend.**
- 8.00 **Santa Makes You Laugh Out Loud.** Zoe Lyons, Ellie Taylor, Marlon Davis and Iain Lee showcase some of the most popular Christmas-themed viral videos currently doing the rounds online. (R)
- 9.00 **Football on 5: The Championship.** Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Wolverhampton Wanderers v Sunderland at Molineux.
- 9.55 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Peterborough United v Blackburn Rovers.
- 10.25 **NCIS: New Orleans.** The captain of a private yacht, along with a waiter, are murdered onboard the vessel, and the NCIS agents investigate when it emerges the boat belongs to a drug baron.
- 11.20 **NCIS: New Orleans.** Pride goes rogue to take down drug baron Garcia, and when his NCIS colleagues volunteer to help, he launches an undercover operation that could cost their careers and their lives.
- 12.15 **SuperCasino.** Live interactive gaming.
- 3.10 **FILM: The Craigslist Killer** (2011). True-life drama, starring Jake McDorman.
- 4.40 **Cruising With Jane McDonald.** The presenter enjoys a series of ocean odyseys. (R)
- 5.00 **House Doctor.** (R)
- 5.20 **Wildlife SOS.** The work of an animal sanctuary. (R)
- 5.45 **Chinese Food in Minutes.** (R)

December 10



Match of the Day 2

10.30pm

Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Manchester United v Manchester City, Liverpool v Everton and Southampton v Arsenal.



Ski Sunday

5.15pm

Men's World Cup slalom action from Val d'Isere in France and a chat with Sheffield free skier James Woods, who is hoping to add an Olympic title in 2018 to his X Games gold.



The Chase

4.40pm

Bradley Walsh presents as four contestants answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on ruthless quiz genius the Chaser and secure a cash prize.



Britain's Wildest Weather 2017

6.30pm

Some of the UK's most unusual weather in the past year, featuring first-hand accounts and footage. Plus, a look at the scientific explanations for these unusual conditions.



Need for Speed

6.45pm

An ex-convict returns to the illegal street racing circuit to get revenge for his unjust imprisonment. Action adventure, starring Aaron Paul, Dominic Cooper and Imogen Poots.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast.**
- 7.35 Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights from the Premier League, including West Ham United v Chelsea at the London Stadium and Newcastle United v Leicester City at St James' Park. (R)
- 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.**
- 10.00 Fern Britton Meets Barbara Dickson.** The singer and actress discusses how her Catholic faith has helped her overcome obstacles in her life, and how she suffered from anxiety at the height of her fame.
- 11.00 Sunday Politics West Midlands.** The week's events at Westminster, presented by Sarah Smith. Including a regional round-up.
- 12.15 Bargain Hunt.** Two teams search for items at Kent County Showground in Detling. (R)
- 1.00 BBC News; Weather.**
- 1.15 Escape to the Country.** People search for their ideal rural retreats. (R)
- 1.50 Mary Berry's Country House Secrets.** Mary visits Powderham Castle in Devon. (R)
- 2.50 Lifeline.** On behalf of Dementia UK.
- 3.00 Songs of Praise.** Josie d'Arby follows a Christmas tree being delivered from a forest to a church.
- 3.35 FILM: Toy Story (1995).** A jealous toy cowboy vies with a charismatic hi-tech astronaut figure for their owner's attention. Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks, Tim Allen and Don Rickles.
- 4.50 Blue Planet II.** Footage of animals that live on the coast. (R)
- 5.50 BBC News.**
- 6.05 Midlands Today; Weather.**
- 6.15 Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison and Matt Baker present the show from the Norfolk-Suffolk border, discovering a conservation effort to save two local species on the brink of extinction.
- 7.15 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Claudia Winkleman and Tess Daly reveal the results of last night's viewers' vote, which will decide who is going through to next week's final. With music from Craig David.
- 8.00 Blue Planet II.** The impact of humans on aquatic wildlife, from albatrosses unwittingly feeding their offspring plastic to communications between animals disrupted by noise. Last in the series.
- 9.00 Attenborough and the Giant Elephant.** The naturalist investigates the life of a Victorian elephant, supposedly the largest that ever lived, that became famous at London Zoo and as part of PT Barnum's circus.
- 10.00 BBC News.**
- 10.20 Midlands Today; Weather.**
- 10.30 Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Manchester United v Manchester City, Liverpool v Everton and Southampton v Arsenal.
- 11.35 The Women's Football Show.** A look at the biggest issues in the women's game, focusing on matters at both club and international level.
- 12.10 Ronny Chieng: International Student.** Ronny agrees to take part in the law faculty's comedy show, but finds he does not like the theatre or those involved in it.
- 12.40 Weather for the Week Ahead.**
- 12.45 BBC News.**

BBC2

- 6.05 Coast.** Stories of workers from around the UK's shores, from drivers parking hundreds of new cars on board a transporter to the superstar entertainers of Edwardian Blackpool. (R)
- 7.05 Gardeners' World.** Monty Don gets on with some seasonal jobs at Longmeadow. (R)
- 7.35 The Secret History of the British Garden.** The extraordinary changes that occurred in the 19th century, as technology made gardens more lavish and more widely available. Monty has a visit to Queen Victoria's royal retreat. (R)
- 8.35 Countryfile.** Helen Skelton and Sean Fletcher explore the Cleveland Way. (R)
- 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites.** Matt Tebbutt presents highlights of the series, recalling his favourite moments from previous years in the kitchen.
- 11.00 Food & Drink.** Tom Kerridge is joined by fellow chef Glynn Purnell. (R)
- 11.30 My Life on a Plate.** Christopher Biggins reminiscing about his childhood in Salisbury. (R)
- 12.15 MOTD2 Extra.** Mark Chapman presents football discussion.
- 1.00 Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Coverage of the opening session of the final from the Barbican Centre in York, as the tournament widely regarded as the second-most prestigious on the calendar continues. Subsequent programmes subject to change.
- 5.15 Ski Sunday.** New series. Men's World Cup slalom action from Val d'Isere in France.
- 6.15 Flog It!** Antiques experts James Lewis and Caroline Hawley visit Wolverhampton Art Gallery where they assess aboriginal art and a 1920s tennis racket. Paul Martin presents. (R)
- 7.00 Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Coverage of the second session of the final from the Barbican Centre in York, where the first player to reach 10 frames will be crowned champion.
- 11.00 Employable Me.** Psychologist Nancy Doyle invites a woman with cerebral palsy and a visually impaired man to her training centre where they learn how to access the "hidden" jobs market. (R)
- 12.00 Athletics: European Cross Country Highlights.** Action from the annual championships, featuring the men's and women's races in Samorin, Slovakia.
- 1.05 FILM: Jo Nesbo's Headhunters (2011).** A corporate headhunter moonlights as a thief, but his latest robbery leads him to uncover a dangerous secret. Crime thriller, starring Aksel Hennie and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau.
- 2.40 Sign Zone: Question Time.** Topical debate from Swansea, chaired by David Dimbleby, with panelists including Welsh Labour Party leader Carwyn Jones and TV and radio host Richard Bacon. (R)
- 3.40 Sign Zone: Holby City.** A new arrival in Holby sets the wheels of change in motion, and Jac is forced to take inventory on her personal and professional life. (R)
- 4.40 This Is BBC2.** Preview of upcoming programmes from BBC2.

ITV

- 6.00 CITV: Sooty 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street 6.20 Bottom Knocker Street 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.45 Super 4 7.00 Mission Employable! 7.05 Oddbods 7.10 Thunderbirds Are Go**
- 7.30 Scrambled! Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show.** (R)
- 7.50 Scrambled!: Ben 10.**
- 8.10 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series.** (R)
- 8.30 FILM: Scrambled!: Scooby-Doo! Haunted Holidays (2012).** Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Matthew Lillard.
- 9.00 Scrambled!: Wishcart.** (R)
- 9.25 ITV News.**
- 9.30 Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury.** The presenter heads up the 1,000ft peak Castle Crag. (R)
- 9.55 The Martin Lewis Money Show.** Advice on switching energy providers. (R)
- 10.25 Save Money: Good Food.** Susanna and Matt raid the kitchen of takeaway lovers the Cookes. (R)
- 11.00 Tipping Point.** Game show, hosted by Ben Shepherd. (R)
- 12.00 FILM: Junior (1994).** Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- 2.05 ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 2.15 You've Been Framed! Gold.** The painful reason why One Direction no longer buy pitta bread. (R)
- 2.45 Midsomer Murders.** A music prodigy witnesses a woman drowning. With James Fox and Richard Fleeshman. (R)
- 4.40 The Chase.** Quiz show, hosted by Bradley Walsh. (R)
- 5.35 How to Spend It Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield.** Drones, speakers and perfume are among the latest profiled gifts. (R)
- 6.35 ITV News Central;** Weather.
- 6.45 ITV News and Weather.**
- 7.00 Ninja Warrior UK.** The grand final arrives, and Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara invite the 15 most successful competitors to compete for the title. (R)
- 8.00 The Chase Celebrity Special.** Sam Quek, Basil Brush, Andi Peters and Charlie Higson answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh.
- 9.00 I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here!** Ant and Dec present the final of the celebrity challenge, as this year's king or queen of the jungle is revealed.
- 10.35 ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 10.50 Diamond Geezers and Gold Dealers.** Behind the scenes at Hatton Garden, London's world-famous jewellery quarter, where millions of pounds of gold, silver and precious stones are bought and sold every day. (R)
- 11.50 The Detectives: Inside the Major Crimes Team.** The work of Lancashire Police's major investigation team, beginning as the officers look into an armed post office robbery and the stabbing of a teenager. (R)
- 12.40 Jackpot247.**
- 3.00 Motorsport UK.**
- 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**
- 5.05 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R)

Channel 4

- 6.20 3rd Rock from the Sun.** Part one of three. Tommy lands the family in trouble. (R)
- 6.45 3rd Rock from the Sun.** Part two of three. Dick resumes his battle with Evil Dick. (R)
- 7.10 Everybody Loves Raymond.** Robert joins a cult. (R)
- 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond.** Debra decides to see a marriage counsellor. (R)
- 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** Ray complains about Ally's teacher. (R)
- 8.30 Frasier.** The shrink plots a practical joke. (R)
- 9.00 Frasier.** Builders wreck Frasier's apartment. (R)
- 9.30 Sunday Brunch.** With guests Alexander Armstrong and Adam Hills.
- 12.30 Paul Hollywood: A Baker's Life.** The Bake Off judge returns to his roots in Merseyside. (R)
- 1.00 FILM: Evolution (2001).** Sci-fi comedy, starring David Duchovny.
- 3.00 FILM: The Sorcerer's Apprentice (2010).** Fantasy adventure, starring Nicolas Cage.
- 5.10 The Snowman.** Animated adventure, based on Raymond Briggs' festive tale. (R)
- 5.45 The Snowman and the Snowdog.** Animated sequel to classic festive tale The Snowman. (R)
- 6.10 Channel 4 News.**
- 6.30 Britain's Wildest Weather 2017.** Some of the UK's most unusual weather in the past year, featuring first-hand accounts and footage. Plus, a look at the scientific explanations for these unusual conditions.
- 8.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters.** The actress travels on the famous Great Western Railway, visiting a supposedly haunted castle at Kingswear and recalling childhood holidays when she stops at Torquay.
- 9.00 FILM: The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2015).** Premiere. Retirement home owner Sonny sets out to expand his empire, but must impress an investor's hotel inspector to do so. Comedy drama sequel, with Dev Patel and Maggie Smith.
- 11.30 FILM: Unbroken (2014).** An Olympic athlete serving in the Second World War survives being lost at sea and held in a brutal PoW camp. Fact-based drama, with Jack O'Connell and Domhnall Gleeson.
- 1.55 FILM: Departure (2015).** Premiere. A woman and her son are forced to confront their desires when they meet a mysterious young man in the South of France. Drama, starring Juliet Stevenson and Alex Lawther.
- 3.45 Gillette World Sport.** Including a look back at some of 2017's highlights.
- 4.15 KOTV Boxing Weekly.** Including action from a bout featuring Philip Bowes.
- 4.40 Grand Designs Australia.** Hotel proprietors Richard and Denise plan to build a large home on an Adelaide hillside, which involves laying 400 cubic metres of concrete to ensure the house stays in place. (R)
- 5.35 Countdown.** Nick Hewer and Rachel Riley present the words-and-numbers game, with Paul Zenon joining Susie Dent in Dictionary Corner. (R)

Channel 5

- 6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess 6.10 Wanda and the Alien 6.20 Poppy Cat 6.35 Wissper 6.40 Milkshake! Monkey 6.45 Milkshake! Bopping About 6.50 Simon 7.00 Peppa Pig 7.05 Paw Patrol 7.15 Moty 7.20 Milkshake! Bop Box 7.25 Fireman Sam 7.35 Olly the Little White Van 7.50 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.15 Paw Patrol 8.30 Nella the Princess Knight 8.50 Noddy: Toyland Detective 9.00 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 9.10 Shimmer and Shine 9.30 Digby Dragon 9.45 Peppa Pig 9.55 Peppa Pig**
- 10.05 Football on 5: The Championship.** Including highlights of Wolverhampton Wanderers v Sunderland. (R)
- 11.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two. (R)
- 11.30 FILM: The Secret Life of Mrs Claus (2015).** Premiere. Festive romance, starring Julie Benz and David Sutcliffe.
- 1.10 FILM: Journey Back to Christmas (2016).** Premiere. Festive fantasy, starring Candace Cameron Bure.
- 2.55 Trolls Holiday Special.** Short film featuring the characters from the animated movie.
- 3.25 5 News Weekend.**
- 3.30 FILM: Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (2007).** Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp.
- 4.30 5 News Update.**
- 4.35 FILM: Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End (2007).** Concluded.
- 6.45 FILM: Need for Speed (2014).** An ex-convict returns to the illegal street racing circuit to get revenge for his unjust imprisonment. Action adventure, starring Aaron Paul, Dominic Cooper and Imogen Poots. Edited for language and nudity.
- 9.00 FILM: Chappie (2015).** Premiere. Two small-time crooks attempt to use a highly intelligent robot to carry out a heist worth \$200million. Sci-fi thriller, starring Dev Patel and Hugh Jackman. 5 News Update.
- 10.00 FILM: Chappie (2015).** Concluded.
- 10.05 FILM: Resident Evil: Afterlife (2010).** Zombie-fighting heroine Alice's search for human survivors leads her into a deadly trap. Action horror sequel, starring Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter and Wentworth Miller.
- 1.05 SuperCasino.** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
- 3.10 Soap Star Killer: Countdown to Murder.** The events that led to the death of Gemma McCluskie in 2012 and the arrest of her brother Tony. Featuring reconstructions and interviews with her friends and family. (R)
- 4.00 My Mum's Hotter Than Me!** Documentary about people who will stop at nothing to outdo their children or grandchildren in the fashion and beauty stakes. (R)
- 4.50 Access.** Showbiz news and gossip.
- 4.55 House Doctor.** Home improvement highlights from the series. (R)
- 5.20 Wildlife SOS.** The work of volunteers at a wildlife sanctuary. (R)
- 5.45 Chinese Food in Minutes.** Chicken and black bean stir-fry. (R)

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Deaths

MORGAN

William Joseph George
(Joe)
Of Dudleyton Grove, Ellesmere.

Passed away peacefully on November 21, 2017, aged 96 years. Much loved Husband of the late Lilian, Father of Frank, Grandfather of Sarah and Charlotte and Great-Grandfather of Rab, Huw, Angus and Una.

A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Whittington, on Friday, December 15, at 3.30pm.

Family flowers only.

Donations if desired to The Friends of St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Whittington.

All inquiries to DAVID DAVIES & SONS
1 Upper Church Street, Oswestry.

PRITCHARD

Audrey

nee Farrimond

Daughter of the late Fred and Elizabeth Farrimond, of Chirk.

Passed away peacefully on November 15, 2017, aged 89 years.

Devoted and much loved Wife of the late George Edward Bickley Pritchard, with whom she is now reunited, beloved Mother of Adele, treasured Mother-in-Law to Mark, adored proud Grandma to Alexander and Sister of the late Beryl Williams.

Funeral Service to be held at St. Giles Church Shrewsbury, on Monday, December 11, at 12 noon, followed by Cremation at Emstrey Crematorium, Shrewsbury, at 1.15pm.

Family flowers only.

Donations if desired to The British Heart Foundation.

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PHILLIPS

Shirley Doreen

Formerly Pearce

nee Roberts

Passed away peacefully at The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital on November 27, 2017, aged 80 years.

Much loved Mother of Julia, Mother-in-Law of Sam, loving Nan of Martyn and Rhiannon, Rachael and Mike, Richard and Martha and Christopher and a treasured Great-Nan to her 10 Great-Grandchildren.

Funeral Service at St. Michael's Parish Church, Llanyblodwel, on Wednesday, December 13, at 11am, followed by Interment in the Churchyard.

Family flowers only.

Donations if desired to The British Heart Foundation.

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Further details about this vacancy and an application form are available on the school website. (Please note we do not accept CVs).

If you would like to attend the visit or if you have any other queries, please contact Julia Hipkiss, HR Administrator hipkiss.j@marchesschool.net ring her on 01691 664417.

Closing date for applications is midnight on Monday 11th December 2017. Interviews will be held on Friday 15th December 2017.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

The Marches School

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At least five years' experience of working in a similar role is desirable with an A level English qualification or equivalent. Full Clerk training can be provided. Further details about this vacancy and an application form are available on the school website. (Please note we do not accept CVs).

There will be an opportunity for those interested in applying, to visit the school on Monday 11th December at 9am. If you would like to attend on this day or if you have any other queries, please email Julia Hipkiss, HR Administrator on hipkiss.j@marchesschool.net or ring her on 01691 664417.

Closing date for applications is midnight on Tuesday 12th December 2017. Interviews are to be held on Wednesday 20th December at 9.00am.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced disclosure from the CRB.

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New Fiesta that ticks so many boxes

By Graham Breeze

It's Britain's best-selling car so it's little wonder that it's taken Ford nine long years to introduce the seventh generation of the amazing Fiesta.

It's a risky business tinkering with any best seller so the suits at Ford had to think long and hard about giving the B-Segment's dominant performer a makeover. And believe me, you won't be disappointed.

There's the usual broad range of options ranging from the luxurious Vignale, ST-Line, Titanium, Zetec and Style with Active set to arrive in 2018 – so just about something to suit every type of driver.

Active will arrive because Ford feels it has to be in the Crossover market and there's also a 200 PS ST on the horizon to keep the boy racers amongst us happy.

I've been testing the ST-Line and Vignale on the demanding roads of North Wales and found myself yet again shocked at the performance of the ST's 1.0 litre engine which can produce, 52mpg, 0-62mph in nine seconds, a top speed of 125mph and CO₂ emissions of just 102g/km – it never stops amazing me.

I'm not one hundred per cent sure that's enough for the usual ST buyer but the model on test did everything that was asked of it on demanding Welsh roads and handled like a dream.

Ford bosses say The ST-Line range has been popular with customers who aspire to the sporty image of Ford's ST models, but do not require the full performance delivered by optimised ST engines and chassis with sports technologies, time will tell.

ST-Line features sporty exterior styling including unique alloy wheel, grille, front and rear bumper and side-skirt designs. The interior features sports seats, alloy pedals and a flat-bottomed steering wheel, while the driving experience is enhanced with sports suspension.

The Fiesta Vignale offers unique 18-inch alloy wheel designs, exclusive exterior detailing and colours, and hexagonal-quilted, tuxedo-stitched leather seats. It's an unusually luxurious option for a vehicle which will mainly be a city car option and you have to question who will go for this option.

Distinctive

There's the usual wide range of specs and prices ranging from under £13,000 to over £21,000 (with extras) for the ST on test and although Ford claim it's an "all-new" model it's still instantly recognisable. You'll love the choice of grilles for each model though which really do offer a distinctive option.

Ford boasts Fiesta is the most technologically advanced small car on sale in Europe and while one or two opponents may point you in a different direction you can't help but be impressed by the stylish range of top-spec add-ons inside the cabin – a far cry from the basic Fiestas I used to drive as company vehicles so many years ago.

You could stake your pension on the new Fiesta continuing to be a UK best seller because it ticks so many boxes so be prepared to spot them on a road near you.

Five Fiesta Facts:

- Special Screening: The heated leather steering wheel has been tested by Ford engineers to ensure it is resistant to damage



You won't be disappointed in Ford's update with the seventh generation Fiesta

or staining from sunscreen on the driver's hands.

2. Is this seat taken? How does Ford know the Fiesta's seats will remain comfortable for the lifetime of the car? Robot buttocks "sat" in the seats 25,000 times to prove their durability.

3. Pressing engagement: Some of the all-new Fiesta's body panels are made using a

new manufacturing technology that analyses the noise frequencies produced during the stamping process, and can identify a component that will not meet Ford's quality standards before it leaves the stamping machine.

4. Grand slam: The doors now require 20 per cent less effort to close, because of improvements to air extractors inside the car.

5. Playlist perfection: To develop the all-new Fiesta's B&O PLAY Sound System, engineers spent a year (how lovely) listening to more than 5,000 tracks to ensure the premium 675-watt audio system sounds great whether enjoying Adele, the Foo Fighters or to Jay-Z – or chilling out to classical music – no matter how quietly or loudly you play it.

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The XC60 wins three gongs

Volvo wins big at Car Tech Awards

Volvo has again proved its technological leadership, winning four awards at the Car Tech Awards 2018.

Volvo was named Car Technology Brand of the Year for the second year running, while the Volvo XC60 was awarded Best Safety Technology for its revolutionary Steering Support system, Best Sat-Nav for its Sensus Navigation, and Best Safest Car as a result of its remarkable Euro NCAP crash test result.

The Car Tech Awards celebrate the best in-car technology launched over the past 12 months, as voted for by the experts from buyer's guide Carbuyer and technology website Alphr.

Stuart Milne, editor of Carbuyer, said: "Volvo's success in the Car Tech Awards is remarkable. The company scooped Car Technology Brand of the Year for the second year in succession. Our judges were impressed by the way Volvo refuses to rest on its laurels, developing a series of products and philosophies that build on its Vision 2020, that no one will be killed or seriously injured in a new Volvo by 2020. These include its commitment to stop producing cars powered solely by petrol and diesel starting from 2019 – a scheme recognised by the United Nations – as well as the launch of an evasive steering system in its new XC60 and forging a close relationship with Google to develop better-connected cars. This is in addition to the continual and incremental improvement in new car technology that all customers can enjoy."

Every XC60 comes with Volvo's ground-breaking Steering Support technology as standard. This automatically provides steering assistance in an emergency to help avoid potential collisions. The judges were impressed, saying: "It should come as little surprise that a brand so closely associated with safety should take our Best Safety Technology award. The new Steering Support system is a development of the firm's City Safety system. In situations where braking alone won't avoid a collision, the XC60 is able to take charge of steering. With the system, Volvo claims a 45 per cent reduction in rear-end frontal crashes."

The XC60 was named Best Safest Car after its outstanding Euro NCAP crash test result, where it scored 98 per cent for adult occupant protection and 95 per cent for its safety assistance features.

The XC60's Sensus Navigation system – also fitted as standard to every model – was praised by the judges as well. "Its display is a model of clarity and uses the same stunning, efficient design the brand is fast becoming synonymous with. It's not style over substance, though. The large screen makes destinations easy to input, and efficient and accurate routes are displayed. The whole system is responsive, simple to use and sets a new benchmark."



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Here's what it will take to pass the new driving test

By Aidan Rennie-Jones

Aidan Rennie-Jones headed out to see what's changed with the updated driving test. Did he pass? Let him tell you.

The driving test is changing. From December 4, new procedures will be introduced to bring the standard driving exam up to date, so we decided to give it a go before its official implementation.

As I drove towards Kingston-Upon-Thames, where the test would be taking place, I began to feel nervous. What if I failed?

Upon arrival I was introduced to Richard Gladman, the head of driving and riding standards at road safety charity IAM RoadSmart.

Independent

Gladman explained that one of the most important changes to the test is the independent driving section. This will now consist of 20 minutes of driving with a satellite navigation system. However, one in five people will have to rely on road signs to guide them rather instead – meaning not all drivers will be using a screen for directions.

It was soon my turn to get behind the wheel. Before getting into the car, however, I had to complete a sight test. As before, you must read a numberplate from a distance of 20 metres. If you fail this part you fail the entire test.

Sight exam finished, I then get behind the wheel. The first 20 minutes consist of independent driving, with the examiner having a route already planned out and telling me where to go.

Having only driven in Kingston once before, I had no clue where I was going. However, I focussed on the task in hand and managed not to make any major mistakes.

For the second half of my test a sat nav was used. At this point the examiner would usually use his or her own TomTom Start 52 sat nav with a pre-designated location. For my test, however, we used the built-in sat nav of the Citroen C3 I was piloting. You aren't tested on your sense of direction and will not receive any minors for getting the instructions wrong.

Instead, using a sat nav acts as a way to test you in real-world conditions as most of us use the technology on a daily basis.

Another addition to the test is being asked to pull up on the right hand side of the road, when safe. Once parked



Aidan Rennie-Jones says the new driving test is vastly improved and trickier than before

you then reverse back two cars lengths. However, as simple a manoeuvre as this is, it can be tricky pulling back out from the opposite side in to a live lane of traffic. Because of this, many instructors and examiners are calling for it to be removed from the test – causing much controversy. Gladman believes it should be kept in, and I agree with him. He said: "It prepares you for a real-life situation. If you are pulling into a street with parked cars on either side, which will you choose, a space directly outside your house on the right side or travel 200 yards further down the road and park on the left?"

My final task was to complete a front facing bay park – another addition to the test. It now comes alongside the traditional reverse bay park – a well-known manoeuvre.

Although reverse parking was much easier, front facing is also considered very important in demonstrating the skill of manoeuvrability in a parking area, which is why it has been added to the test.

The test was now at an end and I was told that I'd passed – for the second time in my life.

Overall, the new test is vastly improved and definitely trickier than when I originally passed eight years ago. Not only does it cover more real-world driving practices, such as using a sat nav and parking on the opposite side of the road, it also tests your concentration levels much further. This is because using a sat nav requires common sense too, making sure you are fully aware of your surroundings and not just listening to what the sat-nav tells you.

These changes are relevant enough that they have changed the way new motorists will drive on our roads. I feel they make you concentrate more on your surroundings as well as your actual driving. And with learners being allowed to drive on motorways from next year, the standard of driving should improve across the board.

Stay on the bright side of the road

Road safety and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is urging all road users to make themselves visible and bright on journeys in the coming weeks. Making an effort to see and be seen really could prove a life-saving decision, says GEM.

GEM road safety officer Neil Worth says all road users need to take responsibility for ensuring they can see and be seen. "This responsibility not only includes turning lights on, but is also about knowing which lights should – and should not – be used," he says. "For cyclists, it's also important to ensure lights are positioned and angled correctly if they are to be as effective as possible."

"It is hard to believe that some drivers and cyclists choose to leave their car lights off on early morning or late afternoon journeys when light is low and visibility is so poor. Other drivers seem to think it's acceptable to have broken or defective lights, or to use fog lights when there's no fog."

"We urge drivers to check their lights, clean their lights and use their lights, as this will make a big difference in reducing their risk of a collision."

"Most cyclists know they need good lights in order to stand out and be conspicuous in drivers' mirrors. But too many riders still go out in dark clothing with no lights on their bicycles, putting themselves at high risk. The risk is even greater in poor weather, amid the glare of street and vehicle lights. They may think that seeing other vehicles is enough to be safe, but if others cannot see them, then the danger remains."

GEM offers four simple tips that will help reduce high-risk moments or collisions caused by 'invisible' road users:

If you're a car driver, get familiar with the light settings. Make sure you switch on your front and rear lights, but avoid blinding others with full beam or fog lights when not necessary.

Don't rely on automatic light settings and daytime running lights. If you do, you will find that your lighting to the front will be inadequate, while lighting to the rear will be non-existent.

Check your lights frequently through the winter months. Make sure every bulb is working properly, and that you keep your lights clean.

Fog lights are designed to improve



your view and conspicuity when visibility is reduced. But the law requires that you switch them off when visibility improves.

If you're a cyclist, get the best lights you can – and take time to ensure they are secured at the most effective position and angle. Boost safety further by making sure your helmet and clothing are highly visible.

"It's likely there are always going to be occasions when collisions occur, simply because someone had a lapse of concentration and failed to see another road user," Neil Worth concludes. "But by ensuring we are bright and conspicuous, we know we will be playing our part in reducing these occasions to a minimum".

In the black and exclusive to the UK

MINI UK has two special editions of MINI, the Cooper Black Pack Clubman and the Cooper D Black Pack Clubman.

Designed exclusively for the UK, the first MINI Clubman edition offers 17-inch Black Net spoke wheels combined with black bonnet stripes for a sleek and sporty finish to further enhance the characteristic MINI Clubman styling.

Inside, the design cues continue with a Piano Black interior and multi-function steering wheel. The MINI Black Pack badge which is featured on the rear doors of the vehicle highlights the exclusivity of the MINI Black Pack Clubman models.

In keeping with the entire MINI Clubman model range, the MINI Black Pack Clubman models also offer exceptionally high levels of standard equipment including MINI Navigation, Bluetooth, Cruise Control and MINI Connected. The MINI Excitement Pack which includes the MINI logo projection is also offered as standard.

Nicolas Griebner, head of product, MINI UK said: "The MINI Black Pack Clubman showcases the very best of MINI Clubman – a host of specially selected equipment combined with attractive visual options."

The new MINI Cooper available to order at MINI Retailers from today, on the road pricing starts at £21,430 for MINI Cooper Black Pack Clubman (£289 per month, with an initial rental of £289*) and £23,735 for MINI Cooper D Black Pack Clubman.

• The biggest and most versatile MINI to date has been awarded 'Best Compact Crossover' by the Association of Scottish Motoring Writers. The new MINI Countryman was announced as the winner in this fiercely contested segment at the 2017



The car has 17-inch Black Net spoke wheels



An award-winner, the MINI Countryman



The MINI Black Pack badge which is featured on the rear doors of the vehicle highlights the exclusivity of the Black Pack

Scottish Car of the Year awards this evening.

Speaking at the awards, Stephen Park, president of the Association of Scottish Motoring Writers said: "Compact crossovers are in vogue and this year buyers have been spoilt for choice. Our favourite, the new MINI Countryman, marries good design with a spacious, high quality cabin and the choice of two or four-wheel-drive. There's also a huge

options list for those who want to create a unique and personal car."

With its larger external dimensions, and increases in space throughout the cabin and luggage area, the new MINI Countryman offers occupants even greater comfort and a genuinely premium ambience. Useful new features such as electric tailgate control with touch-free opening and unique options,

including a fold down picnic bench at the rear, add to the ownership experience.

The Countryman's on- and off-road ability is readily apparent throughout its design and, for the first time, MINI is offering a plug-in hybrid model with the new MINI Countryman Plug-In Hybrid. "We're thrilled that the ASMW have chosen the new MINI Countryman in this extremely competitive segment," said Leon

Van Schie, head of marketing, MINI UK. "This very welcome award demonstrates that the latest addition to the MINI range is an enticing option which offers greater space, refinement and flexibility for our customers. Furthermore, the new MINI Countryman introduces unique features into this segment which are proving extremely popular with new and returning MINI customers alike."

New levels of luxury for flagship Range Rover



The SVAutobiography has been designed to epitomise "the pinnacle of luxury travel"

Land Rover has pulled the covers off an updated version of its flagship Range Rover SUV.

Called the Range Rover SVAutobiography, the refreshed model is available exclusively in long-wheelbase form, and is hand-finished by in-house customisation department Special Vehicle Operations.

According to the British manufacturer, the SVAutobiography has been designed to epitomise "the pinnacle of luxury travel". It features leather-upholstered

Executive Class rear seats that offer 1.2 metres of legroom, a 40-degree recline capability, hot stone massage function, as well as heated calf and foot rests.

Back-seat passengers will also find electrically deployable tables and 10-inch touchscreen entertainment screens that provide 4G wifi.

The central console, which extends the length of the cabin, also features a refrigerator that can accommodate two wine bottles of four 600ml bottles. There are three powertrains available: a 4.4-litre diesel V8, a

5.0-litre supercharged petrol V8 and a 2.0-litre petrol plug-in hybrid option. Prices range from £167,850 for the diesel, rising to £177,030 for the supercharged V8.

Gerry McGovern, chief design officer at Land Rover, said: "The Range Rover SVAutobiography is the epitome of luxury, comfort and refinement. Our standard-bearer for quality and precision exemplifies the attention to detail and sophistication that has been a hallmark of our most luxurious SUV stretching back almost 50 years."

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The effectiveness consultancy Benchmarking recently analysed what happens when companies include press advertising in their media mix.

They looked at more than 500 econometric models, covering a five-year period and, as the table here shows, they found that adding newspapers dramatically increases the effectiveness of other media.

In the automotive sector they reviewed companies that ranged from the big spending German goliaths of the industry to medium sized independent carmakers.

And they discovered that by adding newspaper advertising to their campaigns, they cranked up their effectiveness by over 70%.

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High-fives win keeps Welshpool flying high

WELSHPOOL Town tightened their grip at the top of the Spar Mid Wales League division one with a 5-0 rout of Llandrindod Wells at Maesdyre.

With title rivals Llanrhedraud in Welsh Cup action, and Llanfair United and Llanidloes Town both dropping points, Pool are now eight points clear at the top, although they have played more games than most of their rivals.

Adam Davies led the way with a hat-trick, while Will Thomas and Ian Probert also got on the score-sheet for the pacesetters.

LLANFAIR United, in fourth spot, missed a chance to turn up the heat on the leaders after being edged out 2-1 away to Bow Street who gained swift revenge for a defeat by a similar score the week before.

Rhun Garner and Steffan Richards stuck for the home side, with United responding through Paul Griffiths' leveller - all the goals coming in the first half.

BERRIEW withstood a late spell of pressure to earn a creditable 1-1 draw at home to title hopefuls Llanidloes Town.

New signing Josh Hartrick made the breakthrough for Llani midway through the first half when latching onto a through ball, his shot beating the efforts of debutant keeper Gareth Barker.

Berriew were back on terms 10 minutes later when a 30-yard cross shot from Mark Jones fell for Mumford, who poked the ball past keeper Aaron Warrick.

Although Richard Davies went close for the Rhiewsiders, Llani would reflect they had enough chances to have returned with the spoils. Mathew Savage shooting over the bar when well placed, while also failing to capitalise on a headed effort.

George Clarke also had a shot cleared of the line and the wood-work also denied the visitors in the second period.

CARNO swamped struggling Machynlleth 6-1 in tough conditions to move up to third with Scott Williams and Peter Rees both bagging a brace, while Andy Evans and Jac Petrie were also on target.

Steve Morgan grabbed a hat-trick as Radnor Valley consolidated their top six position with a 5-0 home beating of basement strugglers Borth United, with Joey Price and Elliot Morris also finding the net.

MONTGOMERY, struggling near the foot of the second division, pulled off a surprise in the quarter-finals of the ER Jenkins Cup with a fine 4-1 victory at home to high flying Builth Wells.

LLANSAINTFFRAID Village are also through, 2-0 victors against Newbridge at Trefca with goals from Wayne Austin and Matty Davies.

Abermule's home tie with Aberystwyth University was postponed, while Hay St Mary's progressed without kicking a ball in anger as visitors Dolgellau conceded.

In the only game in division two, Dyffryn Banw's home encounter with Talgarth Town was abandoned at half time due to a serious injury.

Banw's Bryn Jones was taken to hospital with a fractured tibia sustained right on the interval. The home side 3-0 up at the time with James Vaughan scoring twice and Alwyn Jones getting the other.

Ladies through to FA Cup third round

It was a big day for The New Saints Ladies who reached the third round proper of the SSE Women's FA Cup for the first time with a penalty shoot-out victory at Sporting Khalsa.

After the sides had finished 2-2 following extra time, the Saints prevailed 4-1 in the spot kick decider to put paid to their Wolverhampton hosts.

The Shropshire visitors led in the 23rd minute when Lia Lewis sent a 20-yard volley past home keeper Toni Parkes.

Khalsa hit back on 31 minutes with Lauren

Walker converting a low cross from captain Julie Stirrup at the far post.

In first half injury time, TNS keeper Stacey Garham then tipped a Nat Morris effort onto the bar to keep the sides level at the break.

Sporting Khalsa were then ahead two minutes into the second period with a penalty from Lyndsey Glover after Louisa Anderson was hardly adjudged to have handled from Nat Morris.

But the Saints were back on terms six minutes from time when Charlotte Canlett's cross was

headed out to Emily Ridge who struck a fine half volley into the net from just outside the box.

With extra time unable to separate the sides, the tie went to penalties and it was TNS who held their nerve with keeper Garham, Canlett, sub Sophie Davies and Phoebe Davies all converting from the spot to seal a 4-1 victory.

■ TNS under-19s are three points clear at the top of the Welsh Premier development league (north) after storming to an 8-3 victory at Bala Town - their ninth win in 10 league outings.

COBRA shake off the cobwebs in Cup win

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

COBRA shook off their match rustiness to overcome Powys rivals Newtown 24-8 to maintain their challenge in the Conwy Land Rover North Wales Intermediate Cup.

Having not played for a month, the Meifod side would have been relieved to have got back on the pitch, and produced a solid display on the road to secure a hard fought victory.

They dominated the first half, before the game was held up for an hour with No8 Chris Morris taken to hospital by ambulance after damaging his neck in a tackle, but fortunately the injury was not as serious as first feared.

The Meifod men started the game strongly, with neat offloads seeing Ieuan Williams cross the line on the wing for an unconverted touchdown, before Will Worthington added a penalty for an 8-0 lead.

Newtown hit back with a penalty, but another kick at the other end from Worthington restored the eight point advantage for the visitors.

There then followed three yellow cards, with Newtown picking up the first as COBRA added another penalty for a 14-3 interval lead.

Feisty affair

After the lengthy break following Morris' injury, the home side came out for the second period with real purpose, and reduced the arrears with an unconverted try through Tom Jones following a tap penalty.

With the visitors up against it after having two players sin binned themselves, they had to defend stoutly to repel the home side spurred on by their vociferous supporters.

In an increasingly feisty affair, they steadied their nerves with another Worthington penalty before a length of the field try sealed a hard fought win.

Newtown were pressing with a scrum on the visitors' line, but the ball was turned over as Ieuan Williams broke 40 metres before offloading to winger Iolo White to run in a terrific score, Worthington added the extras to seal a 24-8 victory.

It was a timely workout for COBRA who return to league duty on Saturday when a tough trip to unbeaten high fliers Denbigh in the Welsh League division two (north)

WELSHPOOL are also on the road when they



COBRA centre Richard Roberts tries to break through a couple of tackles in the victory over Newtown

face a big showdown away to basement rivals Abergale as they bid to ease their relegation fears.

Llanidloes kept their flag flying in the Mid Wales Cup with a comfortable 59-0 home success against Treffylawdd (Knighton) in the opening round.

After their 53-0 passage against Welshpool in the North Wales Intermediate Cup the week before, Llani continued where they left off by crossing for eight tries in the chilly conditions.

No8 Gary Horrigan got the first with a pushover score, with right wing Carwyn Williams, captain and centre Paul Jehu, left wing Richard Pryce, fly half Adam Price and replacement centre Huw Owen also crossing, while Jamie Naylor, who started at fullback before switching to scrum half, went over for a brace.

Price had a good night with the boot, kicking all eight conversions as well as a penalty for a personal haul of 24 points.

Eagles flying after Isle of Man success

RUGBY by John Bridgwater

OSWESTRY made light of rock bottom Vagabonds as they stormed to a 41-0 success against their Isle of Man hosts to cement their position in the upper reaches of the South Lancs and Cheshire Two.

Having swamped Port Sunlight 61-0 at Graville Park the week before, the Eagles flew over the sea in good heart and returned emphatic winners with Scott Smith leading the way with a hat-trick of tries.

He got his first on nine minutes when, after Connor Blair had been held up close to the line, Smith drove over the line to break the deadlock.

The Eagles continued to gain ground with scrum half Rory Kershaw impressing on his debut for the first team, while Vagabonds could find no way through the visitors' red and black wall in the rain-drenched conditions.

Skipper Andrew Smith then drove over, but was denied a try after he was adjudged to have been held up, before Vagabonds managed to clear their lines.

The visitors continue to crank up the pressure and their efforts paid off when, after being awarded another penalty, Scott Smith charged over for his second try of the match under the posts, with Luca

Owen-Youens converting to put his side 12 points up. The Eagles were kept at bay in their next raid by some valiant defence before the constant stoppages and penalties being awarded against both teams halted the flow of the game.

But Oswestry were not to be denied a third score when, from a line out on the Vagabonds' 22 three minutes before half time, Fletcher Owen-Youens made the catch before feeding Kershaw.

The ball found its way to Blair who gave a nice pass to Luca Owen-Youens who stormed over to touch down for a 17-0 interval lead with the conversion missed.

Having ended the first half camped in the home team's half, the Eagles were looking to maintain the momentum in the second period.

With the Vagabonds skipper yellow carded as tempers flared in the exchange of heavy tackles, the visitors looked to capitalise.

From the subsequent penalty, Blair made a dash

for the line before feeding Andrew Smith who was stopped close to the try line.

A scrum five was awarded and the Oswestry pack pushed their rivals backwards allowing Scott Smith to score his easiest of his three tries, converted by Blair to put his side 24 points up.

Vagabonds tackled strongly to deny the Eagles any more points before being reinstated to 15 players. After holding out, they were breached again on 68 minutes when, after some great support play, Blair drove for the line before being tackled but unselfishly passed the ball to Nick Clay to score on the overlap for a 29-0 advantage.

Oswestry attacked from the restart with Iwan Ellis and Guy Roberts running at the Vagabonds team. Michael Keaveny with Andrew Smith drove on towards the home side's 22 before Kershaw spotted a gap to run in a wonderful debut try which was converted by Blair.

The rain continued to fall and Oswestry collected their seventh try when captain Andrew Smith produced a lovely weighted kick into space and Blair gathered to cross the whitewash to seal a 41-0 win.

Four-star Town up to season high spot

FC OSWESTRY Town continued their impressive resurgence in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one after putting paid to Eccleshall 4-0 at Park Hall.

Following their last-gasp mid-week loss to promotion chasing Litherland REMYCA, Town responded in fine fashion with a victory that lifted them up to 12th in the table - their highest position so far this season.

The visitors may feel that they were hard done by, but Town were ruthless in front of goal and thankful to keeper Louis Mackin for some important saves at crucial times.

Several changes were enforced after the defeat to second placed Litherland, so it was no surprise that Town took a little while to settle in to the game.

Eccleshall had plenty of possession without threatening too much although a couple of long balls stretched the home defence to the pacey attackers who couldn't apply the finishing touches.

Mackin saved smartly at his near post from one goalbound effort and another flashed into the side netting.

Oswestry started to press the ball a bit higher up the pitch and this brought them into the game before a goal of the season contender was scored by home debutant Stu Vernon.

The ball arrived at his feet some 45 yards out and the forward took a touch before lobbing the keeper with a sweet right foot strike for his first goal for the club. It was a moment of brilliance from the former Welshpool and Newtown player.

For the remainder of the half, Oswestry looked the more likely scorers as the impressive Jacob Farleigh and Joe Newton gave the home defence a torrid time with Jack Harris leading the line brilliantly.

The second goal was scored at a crucial time a minute before the break as Newton left the full back for dead before squaring for Harris to net from four yards and register his 10th goal of the season.

The second half followed much the same pattern as Eccleshall played some tidy football, but Mackin was solid in the Oswestry Town goal - with one smart stop from a volley from eight yards.

Sam Thomas and Josh Sumner were bossing the midfield, though, and providing plenty of possession for Farleigh and substitute Lee Phelan to give the visitors problems.

In the 80th minute, captain Sumner made the game safe with a rare goal. He won possession back 30 yards out and forced his way through two tackles before firing home via a deflection from 18 yards.

In the closing minutes, Town scored a fourth goal following a flowing move down the right hand side.

Farleigh fed Phelan who mesmerised the home defence and then returned it to Farleigh who in turn played in the onrushing Newton. The ball was clipped to the back post for substitute Dan Tinsley to head home from six yards in his first appearance for two months after injury to round off a very good performance.

St Martins suffer six hit

ST MARTINS Village bowed out of the Shropshire County Challenge Cup when downed 6-2 at Market Drayton reserves in the quarter-finals, Zak Ward netting a couple of late consolations.

Chris Bishop scored four times as Gobowen Celtic stormed back to sink basement side Craven Arms 7-3 in the Sportsman League premier division, Ian Heathcock, Ed Rogers and George Hughes with the others.

Ladies make battling point

OSWESTRY Ladies secured a creditable 1-1 home draw with second placed Golborne Ladies in the Cheshire Women's Hockey League division two.

Looking to improve their position which currently sees them lying third bottom, the team visit Neston Ladies on Saturday.

Darlington hat-trick as TNS smash six in Cup

THE New Saints were in cruise control as they sealed their place in the fourth round of the JD Welsh Cup with a 6-0 hammering of Penrhyncoch at a chilly Park Hall.

The six times cup winners, beaten by Bala Town in last year's final, comfortably put the Roosters to flight with Alex Darlington bagging a hat-trick - and also missing a penalty - while Blaine Hudson, Aeron Edwards and Wee Fletcher also found the net.

Penrhyn, toiling in the lower reaches of the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance, battled manfully, but did not help their cause with the dismissal of midfielder Rob Murfet right on the stroke of half time with his side already three goals down by that stage.

Saints boss Scott Ruscoe admitted it was a job done as his side progressed in a competition they would dearly like to win again this season.

"It's a big cup, one you want to do well in," he said. "The be-all-and-end-all is to get through which we did, and overall I was happy."

"We made changes, and I always felt we would have enough with the side we put out to win the game. For them, it was always going to be tough coming here, so to go down to 10 men made it even more difficult."

"We just had to be professional, keep the ball and move it fast. At times, it was a bit too easy, and players did their own thing, and the game petered out."

The Saints never looked back after defender Hudson fired in the opener on 16 minutes in a goal-mouth scramble.

Pounced

Callum Roberts swung in a corner from the right, Edwards' header was cleared off the line by Jon Foligno, but Hudson pounced to smash the loose ball into the net.

Making six changes from the midweek win against Cefn Druids in the league, the Welsh Premier high fliers doubled the lead on 36 minutes when the recalled Darlington tucked away the rebound after visiting keeper Leigh Jenkins had saved Ben Clark's strike.

Edwards made it three right on half time, when firing home from the edge off the box and, with Murfet seeing red moments later for foul and abusive language, the second half became a stroll for the Oswestry hosts.

Darlington netted his second 10 minutes after the interval, making no mistake after Ryan Brobbel had ball back following Ryan Pryce's pass down the right.

With victory wrapped up, keeper Aaron Jones was given some first team experience as he replaced keeper Paul Harrison in goal.

The hosts then made it five as Fletcher got on the scoresheet on 73 minutes when firing past keeper Leigh Jenkins after Darlington had chipped the ball into the box.

Darlington then spurned a spot kick. However, the former Wrexham man made amends just moments later when heading home Pryce's cross from the right to complete his hat-trick.

Rooke flies to order of merit

A TERRIFIC season has seen Lee Rooke clinch the PGA Cheshire & North Wales members' Tour order of merit crown.

The Guilsfield professional golfer produced a string of high placings in the six events, including a couple of second places, to beat Lakeside Golf Club's Grant Edwards to the title.

In the final event of the season at Knutsford, Rooke, the Royal St David's assistant who is attached to Llanymynech, finished a shot off the pace.

Davies late strike settles tight cup tie

LLANFAIR United Reserves kept their flag flying in the Emrys Morgan Cup after edging out their Abermule counterparts 1-0 courtesy of Ashley Davies' strike in extra-time.

Four Crosses are also through to the fourth round, with Harry Davies netting with his first touch to seal a 1-0 triumph at Waterloo Rovers.

It was the end of the road for Guilsfield reserves who were pipped 5-4 at Rhayader Town following extra time in a thrilling tie.

Meanwhile, Llanfyllin Reserves remain adrift at the foot of the Montgomeryshire League division two with just one point to their names after slipping to a 4-0 loss at Llangedwyn.

Welshpool reserves, who lie just a few places above, were edged out 3-2 at Kerry Reserves while Llanfachan succumbed 2-0 at Carno reserves.

■ Welshpool and Guilsfield have both landed home ties following the draw for the third round of the Central Wales Cup. After byes in the second round,

both now enter the competition with Pool welcoming Penrhyncoch and the Guils entertaining Machynlleth. Both ties will be played on December 30.

Full draw

Caersws v Aberaeron, Welshpool v Penrhyncoch, Guilsfield v Machynlleth (all ties to be played on December 30).

Knighton Town v Berriew, Builth Wells v Llandysul, Carno v Bow Street, Bishop's Castle v Llanfair United, Montgomery v Llanidloes Town, Llanymynech or Newcastle Emlyn v Four Crosses, Tywyn Bryncrug v Hay St Mary's, New Quay v Churchstoke, Radnor Valley v Llanrhaeadr, Llandrindod Wells v Borth, Waterloo Rovers v Presteigne, Daffydd Banwy v Brecon Northcote or Aberdyfi, Forden or Padarn Uker v Kerry (ties to be played on January 6).

The latest returns from Shropshire golf clubs

Hill Valley

Margaret Hiles Brooch: 1 Sue Coupe 33pts (13), 2 Chris Ellwood 28pts (20), 3 Gwen Thomas 25pts (19).

NO Stableford 9 holes (Emerald): 1 B Siersema 17 pts (29), 2 A Wilson 17pts (27), 3 S Coupe 16 pts (13).

Winter League October: 1 P Barlow & J R Jones 43 pts 2 G Briggs & C Edwards 43 pts 3 K Millicker & R Beddoes 40 pts (26).

Mid Week Stableford (Emerald): 1 G Oakes 28pts (26), 2 M Ferguson 26pts (23), 3 J A Pye 24 pts (22).

Sapphire Turkey Trot: 1 B Foster 36 pts (18), 2 C Huxley 36pts (12), 3 J R Jones 35 pts (27).

Emerald Turkey Trot: 1 D McConaghay 39pts (12), 2 J Robinson-Parker 38pts (10), 3 P Barlow & J R Jones 15.

Winter League November (Emerald): 1 T Sheridan & D McConaghay 45 pts 2 F Howard & J Fairlamb 41 pts 3 P Barlow & J R Jones 40 pts.

Llanymynech

Christmas Comp 4 Tex-am: 1 Hywel Roberts, Evans Evans, Neil Edwards, P Davies 101pts b9; 2 Adam Turner, Sue Robson, Barry Lingard 41pts; 3 Adam Pugh, John Turner, Stuart Ball 39pts, 3 Bob Sharpe, Stuart Russell, Di Bradley 39pts.

Men's Winter Pairs winners: Paul Dring & John E Roberts 46pts, 2 Daniel McKay & Dave Field 45pts, 3 Craig Price & Jamie Kirkham 44pts.

Oswestry

Tinsel and Turkey: 18 holes Am Teams of three: 1 Ann Garbett, Margaret Ratcliffe, Marie Male 5pts, 2 Dorothy Mortram, Alma Burrows, Barbara Bow 66pts; 2 Sandra Jones, Sarah Weaver, Julie Edwards 69pts; 4 Wendy Pugh, Helen Williamson, Dot Bowen 66pts; 5 Margaret Green, Judith Thornell, Carol Johnson 65pts; 5 Gina Hatt, Margaret Evans, Sam Parker 65pts.

Decorate your golf bag prize 2017: Setsuko Watanabe - Brenda Wilson - Maureen Crane Reindeer family.

Shrewsbury

Ladies 9 hole Stableford with double points on par 3: Division 1: 1 Jamie Steggles 22pts; 2 Brian Hill 20pts; 3 Shirley Jackson 19pts; Division 2: 1 Celia Russell 21pts; 2 Anne Jones 20pts; 3 Sandra Haw 20pts (OCB); Division 3: 1 Amanda Christmas 22pts, 2 Liz Somerville 19pts, 3 Elena Withers 16pts.

The Brown

Winter League: 1 Brian Stuttard 25pts; 2 Ian Davies 24; 3 Paul Shore 24; 4 Garry Gregory 23.

Christmas Competition No. 2: 1 Ian Davies 38pts; 2 Trevor Williams 37; 3 Terry Brough 35 (on back 9); 4 Paul Shore 35 (on back 9); 5 Barry Thomas 35.

Wrexham

Seniors Winter Stableford 5 (15 Hole): 1 Derek Taylor 31/18, 2 Dave Rogerson 30/16, 3 Roger Oliver 30/18.

Shrewsbury

A have scored the shock result of the season by tripping up Newport A on their seemingly triumphant march to retaining the Shropshire Chess League championship, writes TOBY NEAL.

And it was a case of two players who weren't there, and one player who was. Newport were missing brothers Keith Arkell, who is a Grandmaster, and Nick Arkell, but even without them had on paper more than enough firepower to overwhelm the home side. In their absence it was a return to the Shrewsbury ranks by Jamie Hopkins, who has not played this season and hardly played at all last season, which was the key to Newport's first defeat of this campaign.

Although Hopkins lost on top board to Nick Rutter, the fact that he was able to play at all ensured that the lower boards were more of a fair fight than they would otherwise have been, and Shrewsbury were able to take advantage of this rare opportunity.

With the running score on the evening level, the result all turned on the outcome of the encounter between Daniel Lockett and Chris Lewis.

Lockett won a pawn with a tactic but it also unleashed a raging attack and Lewis soon resigned, meaning a famous match win for Shrewsbury.

Llanrhaeadr heroes toast historic win

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

NEVER-SAY-DIE Llanrhaeadr pulled off the big shock in the third round of the JD Welsh Cup after overcoming Cefn Druids 3-2 to spark jubilant scenes at the Recreation Field.

The Spar Mid Wales League side twice came from behind through Iwan Matthews' brace, before Khyam Wyton sealed a famous victory with a headed effort two minutes from time.

"We took our chances, and there were wild scenes at the end," said Llan chairman Mel Roberts. "It was an historic day for the club."

The Druids, themselves going well in the Welsh Premier this season, led for the first time through when former Llanfair United player James Davies tapped in on 19 minutes.

But Llanrhaeadr were up for the fight and were back on terms eight minutes later when Matthews planted a stunning 20-yard volley into the net to level matters.

The real excitement came in the last 10 minutes, with Davies nipping in to restore the Druids' lead on 83, only for Matthews to level two minutes later with a far post header from a right wing cross by Tom Evans.

There was one final twist two minutes from time as Wyton got in front of his marker to nod in another cross from Evans after good work on the right.

Matthews, who started the season with Guilsfield before returning to the club, could have completed his hat-trick but was denied by a fine save from keeper Michael Jones after breaking through in the closing moments.

But Llan, managed by former Druids forward Marc Griffiths, had done enough to reach the last 16 of the prestigious cup competition for only the second time in their history.

It was another disappointing trek to Mid Wales for the Ancients who crashed out 4-1 away to Llanfair United in last season's competition.

Opportunity

GUILSFIELD'S interest in the JD Welsh Premier Cup came to an end as they slipped to a narrow 2-0 exit against Newtown at Latham Park.

The villagers had made the trip in good heart following a good run of form in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance, but succumbed to goals in each half from Neil Mitchell (24) and Jamie Reed (66).

They gave it a good go but, after Asa Hamilton spurned a golden opportunity to level the scores, their hopes receded once Reed doubled the home lead from a narrow angle.

"It's a fine margin, but at the end of the day Newtown took their chances and deserved to get through," said Guils manager Nathan Leonard. "They showed their quality in the final third, although we were disappointed with the goals we conceded as both could have been avoided."

"The first half passed us by, but we were a lot better in the second half and had two great chances to score. Had we got back to 1-1, it could have been different."

Chris Cathrall put an early effort over for the visitors, but the best two chances in the opening 20 minutes fell the way of the Robins as Kieran Mills-Evans volleyed into the side netting and Read saw an effort go narrowly over the bar.

But the Welsh Premier hosts were in front on 24 minutes when Mitchell pounced after the visitors had failed to deal with a long throw from Luke Boundford.

Newtown gave themselves some breathing space after the break when Mitchell played a reverse pass into the path of Reed who slotted past Andrew from a narrow angle.

Prize time for the Olympians



Brian Rothera (left) with club chairman Trevor Searle and (right) Claire Birch

IT was a special evening for Oswestry Olympians seniors who celebrated another year of individual and team success.

The presentation event marked the 10-year anniversary of the passing of club founder Doug Morris, whose wife Margaret attended.

Peter Butler won the men's Rose Bowl and marathon handicap while Steve Roberts took the 5k honour and Simon Barkley the 10k handicap.

Tim Tansley capped a successful season by claiming the men's cross country title, and the ever improving Pete Jones was winner of the men's fell race series and half marathon handicap.

Oli Blake was the winner of

Charlotte Jones took the ladies cross country award and Ellen Ashton retained her title as ladies fell race champion.

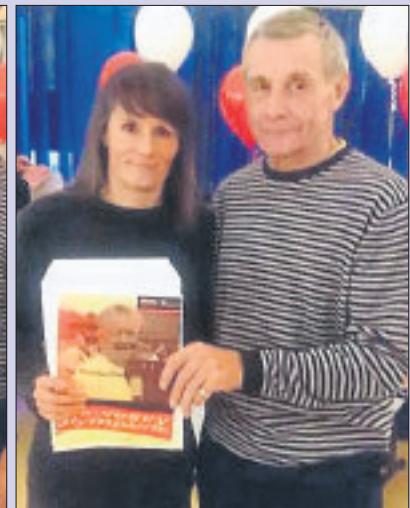
Peter Butler won the men's Rose Bowl and marathon handicap while Steve Roberts and Claire Birch for individual achievements and performances this year.

Ashling Donohue-Harrison was recognised by the coaching team for her attitude to training and performances to win the coaches' recognition award.

Ray Pickett and Ian Watkins received special recognition for their contributions to the club. Awards were presented by club chairman Trevor Searle.



Ian Lowe gets his award from club chairman Trevor Searle and (right) Lou Williams



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Sport

Athletics
Prize time for the
Olympians – P39

Rugby
COBRA shake off
the cobwebs – P38



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New Saints looking to star on TV

THE New Saints aim to strengthen their hold at the top of the JD Welsh Premier in Saturday's televised trip to Bala Town (5.15pm).

Having opened up a five point lead, the defending champions will want to increase that advantage in the coming weeks.

The leaders now head to Bala who have been something of an enigma this season. They started the campaign badly, then revived their fortunes with an unbeaten six match run, before shipping in nine goals in their last two outings.

They were well beaten 3-0 at Park Hall back in August, and Saints boss Scott Ruscoe will be looking to complete the double against a side who finished third last season.

"We beat them convincingly in front of the TV cameras in the second game of the season in what was arguably our best performance," he said.

"They have had a couple of poor results in their last two games, so we'll be looking to get at them, but they have some decent Welsh Premier players so we can't treat them lightly. But it's up to us to go there and put in the kind of performance we are capable of."

"We made changes for the Penrhyn-coch game, but we'll look to field our strongest team on Saturday."

The Saints have a good record against Bala, and were unbeaten in all meetings between the sides before losing to the Lakesiders in the final of the Welsh Cup last season.

It's a big fortnight for the defending champions who, after taking on Bala this weekend, entertain last season's runners-up Connah's Quay Nomads the following Friday.

They have two long term absences in winger Adrian Cieslewicz, who is out for the season with a knee problem, and defender Steven Saunders (thigh).

TNS LADIES made history when they reached the third round proper of the SSE Womens FA Cup for the first time with a penalty shootout victory at Sporting Khalsa.

Improving Town set to face leaders

FC Oswestry Town get a chance to gauge their progress when they host runaway leaders Silsden in the Hallmark North West Counties League division one on Saturday (3pm).

After their early season struggles, Town have climbed to 12th in the table following a remarkable turnaround in their fortunes.

Last weekend's 4-0 victory over a decent Eccleshall outfit will put the Oswestry men in good stead for their biggest test of the season.

West Yorkshire side Silsden, who were sidelined by the weather last weekend, arrive at Park Hall in confident mood after reeling off 18 wins from their 19 league outings to lead the table by 13 points.

CUP ACES LAND A HOME DRAW

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

SURPRISE package Llanrhaeadr are savouring another day in the spotlight after landing a plum home tie with Bangor City in the fourth round of the JD Welsh Cup.

The Spar Mid Wales League club reached the last 16 of the prestigious cup for only the second time in their history after pulling off a shock 3-2 win over Cefn Druids last weekend. And their reward is a crack at another Welsh Premier side with the big guns of Bangor City arriving at the Recreation Field on Saturday, January 27.

"We're chuffed to bits," said chairman Mel Roberts after being paired against the eight time winners who last lifted the trophy back in 2010.

"We wanted a tie against a big name club like Bangor, and we've got it, so it could not have worked out any better."

"We played Rhyl at this stage three seasons ago, and this is on a par, if not bigger, and hopefully the TV cameras will be there. It's going to be a fantastic day for our club and the village."

The villagers can take heart from their victory against the Druids which again showed they will be a tough nut to crack on their own pitch at the Recreation Field.

Six times winners THE NEW SAINTS face a tricky trip to Cymru Alliance high fliers Caernarfon Town who were 2-0 conquerors of Barry Town United in the previous round.

Tough hurdle

The sides met in a thrilling Welsh Cup tie three years ago at the Oval, with TNS hitting back from a two goal deficit to emerge 3-2 victors.

And just last October their paths crossed in the Nathaniel MG Cup with the Welsh Premier leaders prevailing 2-0 in the quarter-final at Park Hall.

But the Canaries - last season's beaten semi-finalists - are certain to provide a tough hurdle on home surrounds for TNS who are seeking to regain the trophy they relinquished last season.

Meanwhile, Cefn Druids manager Huw Griffiths shouldered the blame after his side crashed out of the Welsh Cup at Llanrhaeadr.

"I can look at a couple of things, but ultimately I got the team wrong and made some poor decisions, so the buck stops with me," he said.

Llanrhaeadr were well set up, and were clinical. They had four chances, and took three of them, but we dominated possession and territory, so it was very disappointing.

"I have too look at myself, and what I could have done differently. But Llanrhaeadr are lovely club, and I want to wish them all the best."

Full draw: Airbus UK broughton v Carmarthen Town, Caernarfon Town v The New Saints, Cardiff Met v Aberystwyth Town, Connah's Quay Nomads v Portmadog, Flint Town v Newtown, Llandudno v Ruthin Town, Llanrhaeadr v Bangor City, Pontypridd Town v Penydarren. Ties to be played on January 27 or 28, 2018.

College named in top 100



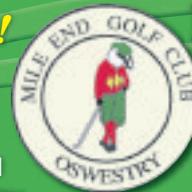
At Ellesmere College are (from left): Rod Jones (coach), Josh Andrady, Sam Ellis, Connor Davies, Gareth Owen (coach)

ELLESMORE COLLEGE has been named as one of the leading schools in the country by a cricket magazine.

The Cricketer has placed Ellesmere College in the top 100 schools in Britain after being selected from hundreds of applicants.

A spokesman for the Cricketer said: "All entries were forensically examined against an exhaustive set of internal and external criteria and we were delighted to include Ellesmere College in the list to feature in the world's leading cricket magazine."

Ellesmere has a strong cricketing tradition with several players going on to represent Lan-



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